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No. XII.

IN PARADISE

VOL. II.

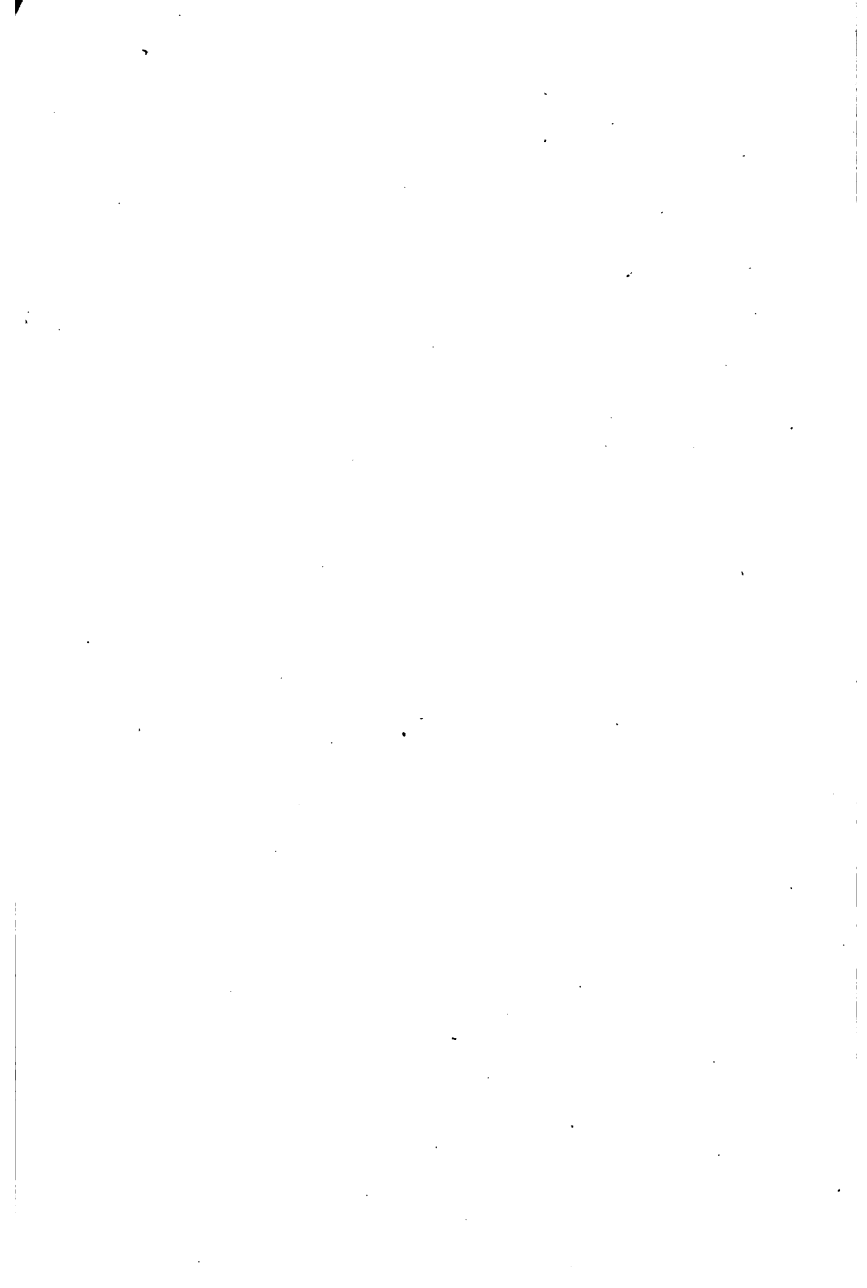
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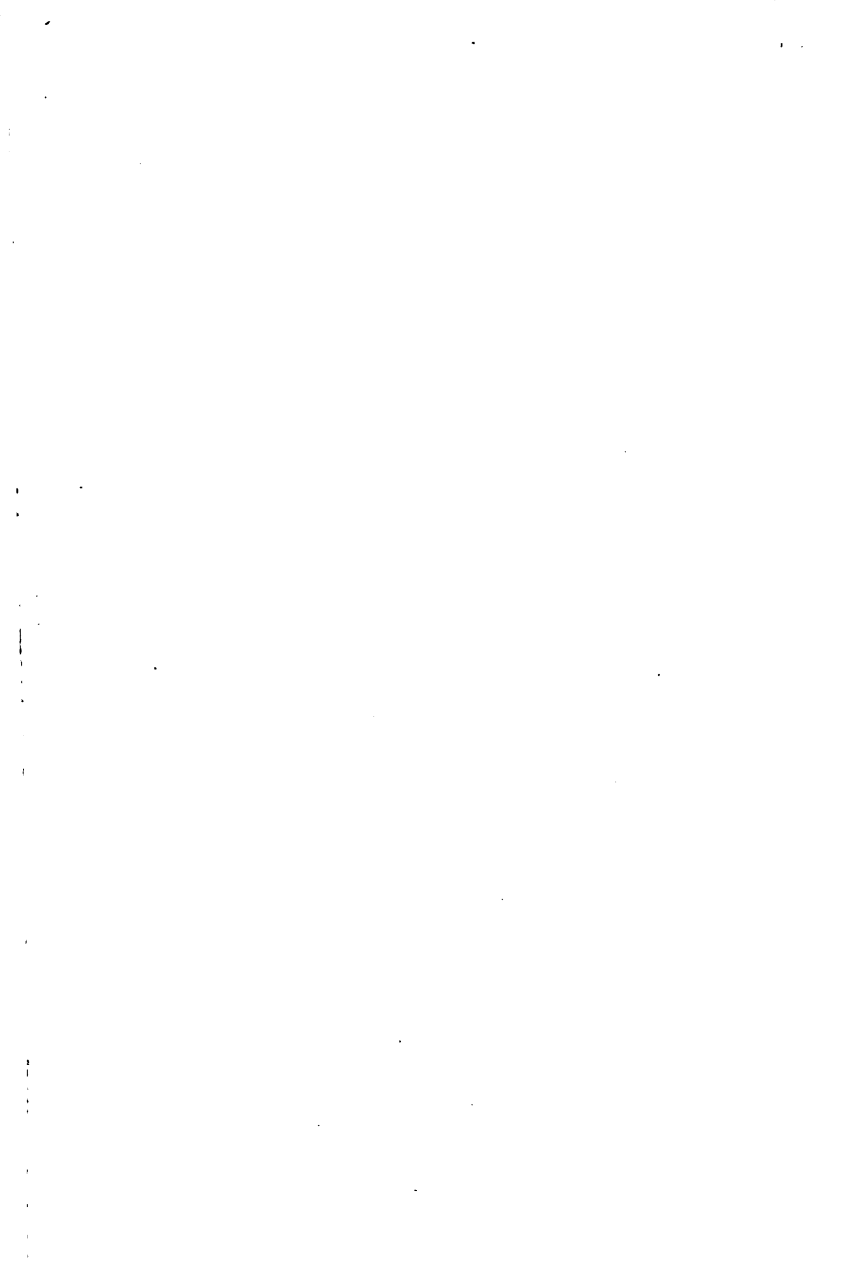
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IN
PARADISE

A NOVEL

FROM THE GERMAN OF
PAUL HEYSE

VOL. II



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IN PARADISE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

A MILE or two from Starnberg, on the shore of the beautiful lake, stands a plain country-house, whose chief ornament is a shady and rather wild little park of beeches and cedars. This stretches from the highway that connects Starnberg with the castle and fishermen's huts of Possenhofen, down to the lake—a narrow strip of woodland, separated only by picket fences from the neighboring gardens, so that a person wandering about in it is scarcely aware of its boundaries. The house itself is equally small and simple, and contains, besides one good-sized apartment, with several sleeping-rooms to the right and left, only a turret-room in the upper story, whose great north window shows at the first glance that it is a studio. From it can be seen, over the tops of the cedars, a bit of the lake, and beyond it the white houses and villas of Starnberg, at the foot of the height from whose summit the old ducal castle—now converted into a provincial court-house—rises like a clumsy, blunt-cornered box.

Some years before, a landscape painter had built thi

modest summer nest, and had made his studies of cloud and atmosphere from this turret window. When he died, childless, his widow had made haste to offer the property to the one among her husband's acquaintances who passed for a Cræsus ; thus it was that the villa came into the possession of Edward Rossel, to the great surprise and amusement of all his friends. For our Fat Rossel was known as an incorrigible and fanatical despiser of country life, who was never tired of ridiculing the passion of the Munichers for going into the mountains for refreshment in summer, and who preferred, even in the hottest weather, when none of his friends could hold out in the city any longer, to do without society altogether rather than to give up the comforts of his city home even for a few weeks.

He maintained that this sentimental staring at a mountain or woodland landscape, this going into ecstasies over a green meadow or a bleak snow-field, this adoration of the rosy tints of sunrise and sunset, and all the other species of modern nature-worship, were nothing more or less than a disguised form of commonplace, thoughtless indolence, and as such certainly not to be condemned, particularly by so zealous a defender of *dolce far niente* as himself. But they must not suppose that this particular form of idleness was the highest and worthiest of human conditions ; at the best the benefit which the mind and soul derived from it was not greater than if one should look over a book of pictures, or listen for hours to dance-music. Let them drivel as much as they liked about the sublimity, beauty, and poetry of Nature, she is and remains merely the scenery, and the stage of this world first begins to repay the price of admission when human figures make their appearance upon it. He did

not envy the simplicity of a man who would be willing to sit in the parquet all the evening, staring at the empty scene, studying the woodland or mountain decorations, and listening to the voice of the orchestra.

To this the enthusiastic admirers of Nature always responded: It was well known that his ill-will toward Nature arose from the fact that no provision had been made for a comfortable sofa and a French cook at all the beautiful spots. He never made the slightest attempt to defend himself against these hits, but, on the contrary, he maintained in all seriousness, and with much ingenuity, his argument that a thinking being could derive more enjoyment of Nature, and a deeper insight into the greatness and splendor of the creation, from a *pâte de foie gras* than from watching a sunrise on the Rigi, with sleepy eyes, empty stomach, and half-frozen limbs enveloped in a ridiculous blanket—a melancholy victim, like his neighbors, to Alpine insanity. Whereupon he would cite the ancient races who had never known such an exaggerated estimate of landscape Nature, and yet, for all that, had possessed the five senses in enviable purity and perfection, and had been very intellectual besides. It is true, they had not known the celebrated “Germanic sentiment;” but there was every probability that the decline of the arts dated from the uprisal and spread of this epidemic, for which reason it was particularly out of place for artists to favor this sort of *Berghuberei* (as the Munichers call the country fever), with the exception, of course, of those who get their living by it—the landscape, animal, and peasant painters—a degenerate race of whom Fat Rossel never spoke without drawing down the corners of his mouth.

But much as he liked to disparage German sentiment,

he could not find it in his heart to refuse the widow of the landscape-painter when she offered him the house on the lake for a price that could hardly be called low. Without any further inspection of the place he concluded the bargain, and, without changing a muscle, quietly suffered the malicious laughter which burst upon him from all sides to die out. "To possess something," he said, calmly, "was not at all the same thing as to be possessed by something." For that reason he would not need to join in their raving, merely because he found himself among people who were crazy and enraptured. And, true to his theory, whenever he was at his villa he pursued his usual comfortable sybarite life, and maintained that Nature had very great charms if one only looked at it with one's back.

He had had the house, which was built in a rustic style, most comfortably fitted up, with a great variety of sofas, rugs, and easy-chairs, and always had this or that friend with him as a guest ; so that even the studio above the tree-tops, in which he himself never set foot, was not altogether lost to its proper use. Heavenly repose, he used to say, would not be nearly as sublime if there were not mortals in the world to bestir themselves and cultivate the field of art with the sweat of their brows.

Now, this year he had taken his æsthetical opposite, good Philip Emanuel Kohle, out with him ; had quartered him in the chamber to the left of the little dining-room—he himself occupying the one on the right—and it is almost unnecessary to add, had given him the exclusive use of the studio. For the rest, they only met at dinner and supper, since the morning slumbers of the host lasted too long for the industrious guest to wait breakfast for him. Moreover, they could never come together without

getting into some discussion, which was always welcome to Rossel, and, as he asserted, highly favorable to his digestion at any time of the day except in the morning. The more he saw of him the more pleasure Rossel took in this singular, self-communing man, who, bloodless, insignificant-looking, and unsophisticated as he seemed, bore about with him a truly royal self-respect, and the consciousness of immeasurable joys and possessions, without for a moment demanding that any mortal being should acknowledge his inherent sovereign rights.

Then, too, though he was so unassuming and so thankful for proffered friendship, he conducted himself toward his host with perfect freedom, for he held the most sublime doctrines in regard to the earthly goods that were lacking in his own case, but were so richly at the disposal of his friend.

A little veranda, with a roof supported on wooden pillars and overgrown with wild grape-vines, had been built out into the lake. A table and a few garden-chairs stood upon it, and from it one could look far away over the beautiful, unruffled water and the distant mountains. At night it was delicious to lean over the balustrade and see the moon and stars dancing in the waves. The nights were still warm, and the scent of the roses was wafted over from the garden; on a day like this one could sit in the open air until midnight.

Fat Rossel had seated himself in an American rocking-chair, with his back toward the lake; a narghili stood by his side, and on the table, in a cooler, was a bottle of Rhine wine, from which he filled his own and his friend's glass from time to time. Kohle sat opposite him, his elbows resting on the table, his shabby black hat pulled down over his forehead, from beneath which his eyes

gleamed fixedly and earnestly out of the shadow like those of some night-bird. They appeared to be magically attracted by the lines of silver that furrowed the lake, and it was only when he spoke that he slowly raised them to the level of his friend's high, white forehead, from which the fez was pushed back. Rossel wore his Persian dressing gown, and his silky black beard hung picturesquely down upon his breast. Even in the moonlight Kohle looked very shabby in comparison with him, like a dervish by the side of an emir. The truth was, Kohle had but one coat for all times of the day and year.

"You may say what you like, my dear friend," said Fat Rossel, concluding a rather long dispute about the difference in character between the North and South Germans—he himself was from Passau and Kohle from Erfurth—"there is one talent you people on the other side of the Main are lacking in ; you can swim excellently, but you can't lie on your back and let yourself drift. Didn't I drag you out here to this tiresome summer retreat because your aspect had become positively unbearable to a flesh-painter, your skin having dried to a respectable parchment, and you standing in danger of composing yourself into an early grave? And now you don't do anything better out here ; but consume one yard of paper after another, while the shadows in your face grow blacker from day to day. Why are you in such haste, my dear Kohle, to produce things for which no one in the world is waiting?"

Kohle's pale face never moved a muscle. He slowly drank a few drops of wine from his glass, and then said, calmly :

"Forbid the silkworm to spin !"

"You forget, my dear godfather, that the worm you

cite as your model has at least the excuse that it spins silk. If you could get so far as to do that, the thing would have a practical purpose. But your spinning—”

“Now you are talking again against your better convictions,” interrupted the other, coolly. “There are more than enough people nowadays who pursue their so-called art for a practical purpose. Just listen once when our colleagues talk about their ‘interests.’ One would imagine he was at the Bourse: for this picture, five thousand gulden; for that, ten thousand, or even twenty and twenty-five thousand; and that a certain artist has an annual income of so and so much, and owns several houses besides—these things make up the motive power of an incredible number of them. Their pictures have no longer a value, but merely a price. How to go to work and make an equal amount from the fabrication of painted canvas, that is the pivot on which all the labor of an artist’s fancy turns, instead of steering straight for the thing itself, as it ought by rights to do. Well, I have nothing in common with this worm that nourishes itself by crawling about in the dust. But what does it matter to me whether I spin silk, or only a plain thread that delights me alone, and from which I can beat my wings and soar away into space?”

“You are a thousand times too good for this century of banks and bourses, my dear enthusiast!” cried Rossel, with a sigh of honest admiration. “But, even though you despise the golden fruit on the tree of life, still all sorts of other things flourish there, which even the best of men need not be ashamed to find beautiful and desirable: for instance, fame or love, upon which you also turn your back with sublime contempt. Your life is quite as earnest as your art, and yet you know what Schiller

says. If you go on in this way a few years longer, your flame of life will have consumed all its wick; and the magic-lantern pictures which the light has thrown on the dark background of your existence will go down with you into eternal night."

"No!" cried the other, and his yellow face lit up with a red flush. "I do not feel this fear! *Non omnis moriar!* Something of me will be left behind; and though you may be right that no glory will come to me during my life, a soft shimmer of posthumous fame will warm my bones under the ground, of that I am certain. For better times are coming, or else may God take pity on this wretched world, and dash it to pieces before it becomes one vast dung-heap from which no living flower will spring. Many a day when I have begun to lose faith, amid the wretchedness of the present, I have repeated to myself those comforting verses of Hölderlin's about the future of mankind."

"Now don't bring in your Hölderlin as a bondsman for yourself," cried Rossel. "To be sure, he was just as unpractical and as little suited to the times as you; and, moreover, one of those erratic fellows who have strayed out of the grand Greek and heathen worlds, and lost themselves in our shallow present—an artist for art's sake, a dreamer and ghost-seer in broad daylight. But for all that, he knew very well what makes life worth living; and though he despised gold, and did not run after fame very eagerly, he took love so seriously that he even lost his reason over it. But you, my dear Philip Emanuel—"

"Are you so certain that I am not on the straight road to it?" Kohle interrupted, with a peculiar, half-shy, half-bashful smile. "It is true, neither this nor that particular beautiful woman has caused me to tremble for the lit-

tle sense I possess. But the woman and the beauty which I, being what I am—”

He broke off, and turned round in his chair, so as to present only his profile to his friend.

“I don’t understand you, godfather.”

“The thing is simple enough, I have never found a beautiful woman who claimed so little of a suitor as to be willing to take up with my insignificant self ; that is to say—for I despise alms—who could seriously be satisfied with this drab-tinted sketch of a human figure that bears my name. And as I am too ignorant of the art of making the best of it, and seeking out a sweetheart who shall be suited to me in all ways and shall bear the stamp of the same manufactory, I stand but a poor chance so far as love is concerned. You will laugh at me, Rossel, but, in solemn earnest, the Venus of Milo would not be beautiful enough for me.”

A short pause ensued. Then Rossel said : “If I understand you rightly, I must confess that I don’t understand you at all. Besides, your estimate of woman is quite wrong. What you want is a husband ; some one who shall show you that she is lord and master, and not a mere puppet. Put aside both your humility and your arrogance, and pitch in whenever you stumble upon a cheerful life. However, do just as you see fit. Who knows but what some time the Venus of Milo herself will take pity on you for having passed over all lesser women-folk in order to wait for the goddess ?”

“And what if she has already appeared to me, ay, has visited me day by day up there above the tree-tops ?” said Kohle, with a mysterious smile.

He pointed with his hand toward the studio, whose window sparkled softly in the starlight.

Rossel stared at him in amazement.

"You fear I am on the point of breaking into a divine frenzy," laughed the little man. "But I haven't yet confounded dreams and reality. That I have seen her, and have learned from her all sorts of things that other mortals do not yet know, is certain. But I believe myself that I only dreamed all this. It was on my very first morning out here. The evening before I had been reading the *Last Centaur*. The birds woke me very early, and then I lay for a few hours with closed eyes, and the whole story passed before me in a continuous train."

"What story?"

"I am now at work sketching it, after my own fashion, against which you will protest again. There is a cyclus of six or eight pictures—shall I tell you the story just as I am building it up in outline? It ought properly to be told in verse, but I am no poet. Enough, the scene opens with a mountain-cliff somewhere or other, the Hoeselberg, let us say, or any other mythological fastness in which a goddess could have lived apart from the world for a few centuries. From out it steps our dear Venus of Milo in proper person, leading by the hand a half-grown boy, who is no less a person than the little Amor. They are both but scantily clad, and gaze around with wondering eyes upon a world that has greatly changed since last they saw it. A city lies before them, with battlements and towers of strange shape standing out against the sky. Horsemen and pedestrians are coming out of the gate, dressed in bright-colored garments of a peculiar cut, which were nowhere in fashion in the world when the old gods were worshiped. The sky is clouded over, and a drizzling rain is gently falling, which forces the lady and her little boy to seek another place of refuge, since they

can no longer find their way back to their old retreat. Yet they lack the courage to enter the town, with its swarming mass of human beings. But in the mountain over across the valley stands a high stone building, from which a tower, with a beautiful chime of bells, seems to ring out over the land an invitation for all men to draw near. It is true, this cannot be expressed in the sketch, but then the cloister over on the hill must have something homelike about it, so that everybody will understand why the fugitives, standing below in the rain, under shelter of a laurel bush, are gazing up at it with longing eyes. And now, when the sun breaks forth again, they muster up their courage and knock at the cloister gate. The nuns rush out at the cry their sister gate-keeper utters when she sees this queenly woman, with the black-eyed child of the gods, standing on the threshold, both half naked, and with their blonde hair falling about their shoulders. Then, too, as is natural, the nun understands no Greek, which would have enabled her to interpret the stranger's request for hospitality ; nor can the abbess herself make out anything more as to the strangers' origin and character. But of one thing she is certain—this is not a strolling beggar of the usual sort. Thus, in the third picture, we see Madame Venus sitting in the refectory seeking to still her hunger ; but the food is too coarse for her, and she tastes nothing but the cloister wine. They offer her a coarse, woolen nun's-dress, which, however, she scorns to wear. The only other dress they have on hand is the thin gown belonging to a beggar who died in the cloister a short time before. This she consents to put on ; and although, here and there, her beautiful white skin peeps through a tear in the old rags, she seems to think this better than to be confined in the black shroud of the sis-

ters. Her little boy has also been provided with a shirt, and is now being passed around from hand to hand, and lap to lap ; for each of the nuns is eager to caress him. While they are sitting thus, on the best of terms, the priest of the place comes to have a talk with the abbess. He suspects something wrong, and stands on the threshold, dumb with amazement, and devours this strange beggar-woman with his eyes. But the little rascal of a boy goes up to him, and succeeds in making his reverence fall over head and ears in love with the strange lady, and scatter his older sentiments for the abbess to the four winds. A fourth sheet shows him as he strolls up and down the little cloister garden with Madame Venus, passionately declaring his love. At the window stands the pious mother of the convent, torn with jealousy ; and it requires little imagination to foresee that her ecclesiastical friend has hardly turned his back before this dangerous guest is, under one pretext or another, thrust rudely forth into the wide world again, with her little boy—who is tired, and would have liked to sleep instead of having to wander about in the stormy night. But a house or hut is nowhere to be found, while, on the other hand, suspicious-looking groups pass by them : gypsies, who cast covetous eyes at the beautiful child ; and one of them—a wicked, toothless old hag—actually catches him by the skirts of his little gown. But, fortunately, he glides out of her hands like an eel, and flies into the thicket, and his mother after him : who is so lost in thought that she scarcely heeds the danger. ‘Where can all the others have gone?’ is the question over which she broods ceaselessly.

“I don’t know yet, myself, whether I shall show any more of her adventures by the way. Every day some-

thing new occurs to me, with which I might illustrate, both humorously and seriously, how, homeless and an out-cast, this beauty had to beg her way through this sober world of ours. But, whenever she appeared at the door of simple and natural beings, she needed to utter no word, and not even to stretch out her hand. She touched the hearts of all; and every one—though here and there with a secret shudder—gave her from his poverty as much as he could spare. Young people, upon whom she had bestowed but a single glance, left house, and home, and calling, and wandered after her—through populous regions as well as through the wilderness—until, in their dreamy blindness, they fell over steep precipices, or into raging torrents, or came to an untimely end in one way or another. But she herself, growing sadder and sadder, wandered along her way, and thought of the times when the mortals who beheld her grew blissful and happy and not wretched, and when they gave banquets in her honor, and laid the most beautiful gifts at her feet; then she was a goddess, with a train of followers whose numbers were incalculable.

“Brooding in this way, she comes one evening to a celebrated pilgrims’ chapel, lying in a charming little valley, and shaded on all sides by evergreen trees; and it is so late that no one observes her as she enters into the empty sanctuary with her boy—who is weary, and whose feet are sore—still holding fast to the skirts of her beggar’s gown.

“Only the eternal lamp is still burning before the altar, but the moon shines through the arched windows, and it is as bright as day within. The godlike woman sees a brown, wooden, life-sized figure seated on a high throne. Two glass eyes glare upon her, and on the head flames a

golden crown ; a mantle of red velvet falls about the angular shoulders, and on her knees lies a wax child in swaddling clothes. She approaches quite near, and touches the mantle, and plucks at the heavy folds ; whereupon the clasp on the neck of the image becomes unfastened, and the lean, wooden body appears, looking ghastly enough. A shudder creeps over the beautiful woman as she sees this image before her in all its lean, worm-eaten ugliness. 'Ah !' she thinks to herself, 'this princess's mantle will become me better than it does that old piece of carving !' and begins to wrap herself in its heavy folds, which give forth an odor of incense ; and then she sets the crown on her head, and asks her boy whether she pleases him. But he only blinks at her a little, for he is tired to death. Then she takes pity on the poor child, lifts the image from its gilded throne, and the wax infant rolls to the ground and is dashed to pieces. She does not heed this, however, but mounts the steps and seats herself in the chair under the canopy, and the little Amor nestles warm in her lap, and, half covered by the velvet mantle, falls asleep on her heavenly bosom. All around her it is still ; no sound is heard but the whirr of the bats as they fly hither and thither under the high dome, not daring to light on the crown of the stranger as they were accustomed to do upon the wooden image, being frightened away by the brightness of her eyes ; until at last the eyes close, and the mother and son sleep quietly on their throne above the altar.

"In the early morning, even before the pilgrims who are encamped all about the chapel have awakened, a young man comes along the road, and, thinking no evil, enters the open portal, through which the gray light of morning has just begun to steal. He has often seen the

wonder-working image that was worshiped here, but has never found that it exerted any particular power upon himself. And now he merely goes in and kneels down in a corner to let his heart commune with its God. But as his eyes roam absently about the chapel they encounter the divine apparition on the altar, sending a shock full of bliss and longing, adoration and rapture, to the very depths of his heart. Just at this moment the divine woman opens her eyes, makes a movement—which also wakes the boy—and has to think a little before she can remember where she is and how she came there. Her look falls upon the youth, who stands there gazing up at her, looking so handsome and earnest, and as if he were turned into a statue. She smiles graciously upon him, and moves her hand in token of greeting. Then a holy dread overcomes him, so that he flies from the chapel, and it is only when he is alone in the solitary wood that he recalls what he has seen, and realizes what a miracle has been revealed to him. And immediately the yearning comes back to him. Like a drunken man he staggers back to the chapel, where he finds the pilgrims already at their first mass. But the marvelously beautiful lady with the boy has vanished; the wooden Madonna is again enthroned under the baldachuin, and even a wax child lies upon her lap, for the priests have supplied the place of the broken one by another. Everything is in its old place, only the crown sits a little aslant on the brown, wooden head, for the sacristan has not succeeded in repairing the mysterious destruction any better. But the youth turns his steps homeward, and bears about with him, through his whole life, the after-glow of this wonderful apparition; striving always to represent, to his fellow-men who had not beheld it with their own eyes, how she

had looked upon him—at first earnestly and dreamily, and then with a winning smile—and how the boy, with his wondering gaze, had illuminated everything about him, as if with balls of fire. And in his efforts to do this—for he was an artist—he has attained to greater and greater power and influence over his fellow-men, and each time has succeeded better in catching the face ; and that is the secret which can be found in no history of art—the reason why this young Raphael has become the greatest of all painters, and his picture of the Madonna surpasses all others in beauty and in power.”

CHAPTER II.

“By all the good spirits, but you are a poet !” cried Rossel, and he sprang up with so unusual an alacrity that his red fez slipped off his head.

“A poet !” responded his modest friend, with a sad smile. “There, you see how low we have sunken nowadays. If it ever occurs to one of us to let any idea enter his head that goes beyond a whistling shoemaker’s apprentice, or some celebrated historical event, or a bathing nymph, he must immediately hear himself scouted as a poet. Those old fellows like Dürer, Holbein, Mantegna, and the rest, were left unmolested to spin into fables whatever struck them as beautiful or odd. But, nowadays, the doctrine of the division of labor is the panacea for all things ; and if a poor fool of a painter or draughtsman works out for himself anything which a poet could by any possibility put into verse, people immediately come

running up with Lessing's 'Laokoön'—which, by the way, no one thinks of reading nowadays—and prove that in this case all bounds have been overstepped. If a poor devil of an artist has a fancy for poetry, why doesn't he go to work and illustrate? After all, it is a trade that supports its man, and one who follows it can be a thorough-going realist, and can easily guard himself against all danger of infection from poetry. But an arrogant wight of an idealist, whom the world refuses to keep warm, and who, therefore, must take care not to let the sacred fire go out on the hearth of his art—"

"You are getting warm without cause, my dear Kohle!" interposed the other. "Good heavens! it is indeed a breadless art, that of the poet, but a deadly sin it certainly is not; and I, for my part, could almost envy you for having such ideas as those you have just been telling me. I'll tell you what—finish your plans, and then we will both of us paint this beautiful story of Dame Venus inside there on the wall of our dining-room. The devil must be in it, if we don't succeed in producing something that will throw the Casa Bartoldi deep into the shade."

He knew when he said this what a great proposal he had let fall upon the listening soul of his friend.

Kohle, like all art apostles of his stamp, despised easel and oil painting, as it is usually practised. On the other hand, the great aim of his longing and ambition was to be able, just for once, to wield his fresco brush to his heart's content on a wall a hundred feet long; and his friends were fond of plaguing him about a wish that had once escaped him—"My life for a bare wall!" Heretofore no one had been willing to entrust him with a square yard of his house, or even of his garden, for this purpose.

And now, suddenly, he had only to put forth his hand, and see his greatest desire for monumental art-creation fulfilled.

At first he could not believe in such overwhelming good-fortune. But when the look of glad surprise and trembling doubt which he cast upon his host encountered a perfectly serious face, he could no longer hold himself in his chair. He sprang to his feet, threw his shabby black hat high into the air, and, with outstretched arms and glowing face, prepared to throw himself upon his friend, who was slowly strolling back and forth. "Brother!" he cried, in a half-stifled voice, "this—this—" But Rossel suddenly stood still and made a motion with his hand, which checked the enthusiast in the very height of his wild excitement.

The remembrance of a similar moment, when his heart had overflowed toward his friend, and he had been upon the verge of formally offering him "good-comradeship," came back to him with a rude shock. Then the word had not yet passed his lips, when Rossel, at the very same moment, though apparently without intention, had begun to speak of his aversion to the display of tenderness among men, and had frightened away this outburst of brotherly affection. And could it be that even now the ice was not to be broken between them, and that this fulfillment of the dearest wish of his life was nothing but the favor of a gracious patron, a whim on the part of the rich host toward the poor devil who sat at his hospitable table? His proud, sensitive soul was just on the point of revolting against this, when from afar off a sound struck upon his ear, which, as he instantly perceived, had been heard by Edward sooner than by him, and which had been the cause of his gesture of repulse. The soft notes of a flute

came wafted to them over the lake, nearer and nearer to the spot on the bank where Rossel's villa stood.

"It is he!" said Rossel. "Even the peace of night is not so sacred as to guard defenseless beings from the attacks of this romantic amateur. Look here, Kohle, see how the boat is just floating out of the shadow into the silvery path of the moon—Rosebud stands erect in the centre, like Lohengrin; and that tall figure at the tiller is undoubtedly Elfinger's high-mightiness—they are making straight for our balcony.—well, let the will of the gods be done!"

The notes of the flute died away in a melting trill, and immediately afterward Rosenbusch sprang ashore. "*Sallem aleikum!*" he cried, waving his hat. "We make our attack from the side of the lake, obeying necessity and not our own desire, for a mouse-hole where two travelers might lay their heads for the night couldn't be had in Starnberg for all the gold of California. Saturday and this beautiful weather have lured half Munich out there. I immediately thought of you, old boy, and told Elfinger, who thought it would be presumptuous for us to force ourselves on you without a special invitation, that, in addition to all sorts of oriental qualities which are hateful to me, you also possessed three most estimable ones—namely, a number of superfluous divans, excellent coffee, and a spirit of hospitality worthy of a Bedouin. Consequently, that, unless your shady roof chanced to be sheltering a few odalisques who had already taken possession of all the couches, you would not turn us away from your threshold. At the worst, it won't be any great misfortune to two jolly juveniles like ourselves to pass a night, just for once, on the floor of a fishing-boat.

' Upon the laughing wave below,
The stars are mirrored bright ;
The mighty heights that frown around
Drink in the mists of night, ' "

he sang, to an air of his own composing, his eyes turned upon the mountains that lay hazy in the distance.

" You are welcome to my poor roof," responded Ros-sel, with gravity, cordially shaking hands with the actor, whom he greatly esteemed, and whose modesty caused him to hang back a little. " All the divans I possess stand at your service ; and of blankets, too, there is no lack. I only hope, for your sake, that you have already satisfied the grosser wants of the body. Our daily supply of provisions is exhausted, and there is no attendant spirit at hand whom I could send to the neighbors in quest of aid. I have only old Katie out here, and she—"

" Does she still live, that venerable virgin with the silver locks, who thinks how she might have had children, and grandchildren, and shakes her head ? " cried the battle-painter. " Come, Elfinger, it behooves us to go and offer our homage to the lady and mistress of the house."

" You will have to curb your impatience until morning, my dear Rosebud ; the old woman has taken it into her head to relieve the loneliness of the long winter out here on the lake by making *Enzian schnapps*, and diligently devotes herself the whole summer long to the consumption of her own manufacture, so that she is good for nothing after eight o'clock. The most tender flute-sere-nade would not wake her from her deathlike *Enzian* sleep. Were it not that she is reasonably sober during the day, is a good cook, and is as faithful as an old dog, I would have sent her to the hospital long ago."

In the mean time, Rosenbusch had paid off and sent

away the boatman, whom he never spoke of except as the "Fergen," and now rushed up the steps to the balcony, where, with a merry jodel he threw himself into a chair, and drank the health of the others from Kohle's half-filled glass.

" ' Well for the rich and happy house,
That counts such gift but small ! ' "

he cried. " Long life to you, dear *Westöstlicher*. Truly, Rossel, there are moments when I acknowledge and honor the old proverb, ' Wisdom is good, especially with an inheritance.' If I could call a spot of earth like this mine, I myself would try to be as wise as you, and no longer assist at the decline of modern art. But no ; after all, I couldn't stand doing nothing but feeding my white-mice and giving myself up to intellectual laziness. However, enough of this. Out here is truce and neutral territory, and I know what I owe to hospitality."

" Since you began it yourself," said Rossel, with a smile, " I have a single favor to ask of you. I have a number of song-birds in my garden, and I am afraid you will drive them from me if you give a loose rein to your baleful passion for music. They will acknowledge your superior genius, and shrink from competition. If you positively must play, row out upon the lake. There is a southwest wind which will waft the strains across to the castle over opposite, where they will do no harm."

" So be it," responded the battle-painter, with great seriousness ; " though, in any case, we shan't burden you with our presence very long. For, to-morrow—" He broke off, for Elfinger gave him a warning look. In the meanwhile, Kohle had hastened down into the cëllar, and now returned with a few slim bottles and the wine-cooler, which he had filled afresh with ice.

He had not yet spoken a word ; but his whole face beamed with an inner content such as he seldom exhibited. The thought of the bare walls inspired him as the happiness of a secret love does others. Meantime, Elfinger had descended again to the bank, from which a little path led to a bathing-house. Soon his friends who had remained behind saw him swim out into the lake, his black, curly head rising out of the silver path of the moonlight, "like the head of the Baptist on Herodias's charger," said Kohle. "Except that he feels himself much better off than that poor devil," remarked Rosenbusch, who was comfortably drinking and smoking. "You must know that we wouldn't have had the absurd idea of making a pilgrimage out here on Saturday evening, in company with the whole population of Munich, had not our sweethearts shown us the way. Papa Glove-maker has permitted them to visit a Frau godmother, who is staying in Starnberg for the summer. We had no sooner gotten wind of this, through a trusty go-between, than we very naturally made up our minds that we could find no better place to spend to-morrow than here. Of course, we have taken care to make arrangements for meeting to-morrow. We are going to take you with us as guard of honor, Philip Emanuel. It is to be hoped you have no objections to the plan ?"

"Not the slightest," responded Kohle, good-naturedly. "Of course, the Frau godmother will fall to my share."

"And how about Elfinger's sweetheart ? Is that little bride of heaven also in the conspiracy ?" asked Fat Rossel, who was sitting in his rocking-chair again.

"Nothing certain is known about that ; but, at all events, our friend builds great hopes upon this favor of

fortune, which will permit him, for the first time, to pass several hours in the company of his darling. Only think ; we also succeeded, a short time since, in finding out what it really is that has disgusted the good child with the world, and that is driving her into the convent by main force."

He cast a look upon the lake, as though he were measuring the distance between the balcony where they sat and the swimmer in the water.

"If you will keep close about it, I will tell you the secret," he continued, in a low voice. "After all, it only does honor to the poor girl that she wants to take the sins of others on her own shoulders, and do penance for them all her life long. Papa Glove-maker, you must know, appears to have been by no means such a very long-faced character in his youth, but, on the contrary, to have led a pretty wild life, and to have been mixed up in scrapes that were not always of a particularly edifying nature. However, he married young, and soon after this event there came a mission of Jesuits to the city, or to some place in the neighborhood—on this subject the records are silent—and the young sinner, who had already had ample opportunity for repentance in his marriage relations, allowed his conscience to be shaken to such an extent by the priests that he suddenly took a fancy to retire almost entirely from the world, neglected his business so that he almost reduced himself to beggary, and practically separated himself from his young wife. He had long lost her love, for which he did not seem to care ; but this was not the worst. Devoted to his vigils and penances, he is said to have known of and condoned an intimacy which she soon after formed with a young landscape-painter, who lived for a long time in the house. The

birth of a little girl, who was named Fanny, ended this relation ; but, even then, the friendship shown for the artist did not at once cease. He stood as the child's god-father ; and every year afterward he continued, although he had removed from Munich, to make a visit to the house on little Fanny's birthday. It was soon obvious, however, that Herr Glove-maker's views had changed ; that he viewed him with less and less favor each time that he appeared ; and that a crisis was approaching. And so, on one of these birthdays, when the girl had already begun to think for herself a little, there must have been a scene between her three elders, which was overheard by the unfortunate young creature. A sudden revelation came upon her, that terribly darkened and shattered her innocent spirit, so that she grew introspective and melancholy—and perhaps she had some spiritual adviser who was always giving her new fancies, and painting the terrors of the hereafter in stronger colors. Nanny, our informant says, knows nothing of the whole horrible business ; and Fanny used to be just such another merry creature. If this melancholy idea did not so weigh upon her—that she must do penance for the sins of her parents—she would be as healthy, bright, and warm-blooded as her younger sister. Since Elfinger has learned this family secret, he has gained new hopes of turning this little bride of heaven back from the cloister. But it will hardly succeed ; and if he doesn't use heroic remedies—”

He didn't finish his sentence ; for just then his friend, refreshed by his bath, came running up the steps ; and now, with an obvious sense of comfort, but with the rather quiet manners habitual to him, gave himself up to the enjoyment of the wine. Kohle, too, spoke only in monosyllables, so that Rosenbusch and Rossel had to bear the

burden of the conversation. Moreover, as the day had been hot, and as they all really needed rest, the bottles were soon emptied, and the airy spot on the bank of the lake deserted.

Upon entering the house, Kohle's first care was to light the candles. Then he dragged out two woollen blankets from a wardrobe, where all sorts of things were stored. While occupied with this work he allowed his eyes to wander stealthily and tenderly over the long wall of the little room, as if he were measuring off and taking possession of the site of his future deeds. Two low, well-stuffed divans stood against these walls, an old table occupied the centre, and over it hung a chandelier with polished brass branches. The broad glass door of the hall opened upon the lake, and no sound penetrated into this airy room but the gentle murmur of the splashing waves, and a soft snoring from the chamber near the kitchen where old Katie had her bed. After all the doors had been shut and locked, even this nocturnal music was heard no longer.

The two new guests had just stretched themselves out on their couches, by way of experiment, and had wished their host good-night with a great deal of laughter and joking, when they were roused again by a distant ring at the park gate. Kohle hastily seized a light and ran out. Five minutes after they heard him return ; he was talking with some one whose voice they none of them seemed to recognize. But, the moment they entered, the three shouted as with one voice :

“Our baron ! And so late at night !”

They had recognized Felix more from his figure and bearing than from his features, though the light of the candle fell full upon his face ; for it looked wan and

transformed as if by some severe illness. His eyes, roaming restlessly about the room, had a piercing, feverish glitter, so that his friends stormed him with questions as to whether he was sick or had seen a ghost on his way through the wood.

He gave a forced laugh, passed his hand across his cold forehead, on which great beads of perspiration were standing, and declared that he had never felt better in his life, and that he was as proof against ghosts as the babe unborn. In spite of all this, there was something constrained in all his movements, and his voice sounded hoarse and unnatural, as it often does when a person is laboring under great excitement.

He told how he too had been unable to find quarters in Starnberg, and had left the horse on which he had ridden out at the tavern, in order to make the remaining half-hour's journey to Rossel's country-seat on foot; and that, in trying to follow the rather confused directions which had been given him, he had gone a good deal out of his way. It was this that had reduced him to his present demoralized condition. But he would not disturb them on any account, and only asked for a drop of water and a corner where he could stretch himself out, for he was as tired as a dog, and would be content even with a dog's kennel.

He drained off a large glass of wine at a single swallow, then, with averted face, shook hands with his friends and made a few forced jokes—something he never thought of doing when he was quite himself. He flatly refused to accept of Kohle's offer to give up his bed to him, but gladly consented to be led into the studio, where, by the aid of a few blankets, a deer-skin, and a shawl, they succeeded in transforming an old garden-bench into a very

respectable bed. Then, without even waiting for the others who had escorted him up-stairs to leave the room, he threw himself down upon the couch—"already half in the other world," he tried to say, jestingly, as he nodded good-night to the others.

Shaking their heads, his friends left him. It was evident that this late visit could be explained by no such innocent circumstances as had occasioned that of the two who had preceded him. But, while they were still standing outside the door exchanging remarks about Felix's singular condition, they learned from the deep breathing within that the object of their anxiety had fallen fast asleep.

CHAPTER III.

THE clear song of the birds awoke him while it was still in the gray of the morning, and not a sound could be heard in the house below.

The tops of the pine-trees, seen through the broad studio-window, recalled to his mind where he was, and how and why he had strayed thither.

In the afternoon he had met the lieutenant, whom he had not seen before for a week, although he had zealously frequented all the places where Schnetz was generally to be found. He knew that Irene had left the city with her uncle. In his dull consternation upon learning this in reply to an indirect inquiry at the hotel, he had not even inquired in which direction they had gone. She had fled from him, that he knew; his mere silent presence sufficed to frighten her away, to make the town in which he lived distasteful to her. Whither had

she fled? To Italy, as she had at first planned?—to the east or to the west? What did it matter to him, since he dared not follow her? Nor did he really care to make any inquiries of Schnetz, who undoubtedly knew all about it. And yet he was eager to see the only human being who might possibly give him news of her. And when at last he encountered him in the street, after a day of depression and brooding, on which he had not even seen Jansen and had neglected his work, his heart beat so fast and his face flushed so deeply that it seemed as if his unsuspecting friend could not help reading all his secret thoughts in his eyes. And it really did so happen that the very first words which Schnetz ejaculated, in reply to Felix's inquiry as to how he was, had reference to the fugitives.

Things went wretchedly with him. He had hoped to be rid of his serfdom and slavery to woman, now that his whimsical little princess had gone off with her servile valet of an uncle! Vain idea! The chain which held him now reached as far as Starnberg, and only an hour ago he had felt himself jerked by it in anything but a gentle way. A note from the uncle summoned him to come out in all haste on the following day. Visits had been announced for Sunday from all manner of youthful *haute volée*, noble cousins and their followers; but the old lion-hunter had previously accepted an invitation to a shooting-match at Seefeld, which it would be quite impossible for him to escape, and his niece, poor child, who, for some reason or other, was daily growing paler and more nervous in the country air, felt herself quite incapable of doing the honors of the little villa without the assistance of a zealous and active cavalier. Consequently, Schnetz was her last hope, and he could assure him of

Irene's kindest welcome, and of his own eternal gratitude if he would come and be her knight ! " You will readily understand, my dear baron," concluded the grumbling cavalier, slapping his high boots with his riding-whip, " that there are moral impossibilities which prevent the slave from breaking his chain. But to the hundred times I have already cursed this Algerian camp-friendship, I have added to-day the one hundred and first. It is true, I certainly have a certain curiosity to see how this ' kindest welcome ' of her proud little highness will seem. You know I have a secret weakness for this gracious little tyrant of mine. But it is asking a great deal of me to expect that I should bear with her whims and humors for a whole day. Pity me, happy man ! you who are free from all service, and receive no other orders than those which come from the genius of art."

His speech had been long enough for Felix to think of some appropriate and sufficiently cheerful answer.

" You are terribly mistaken, my dear friend," he said, " if you think I wear no chain. Art, do you say ? She is a gracious mistress to him alone who has gotten so far as to be able to rule her while he serves her. But, as for a wretched beginner and blunderer to whom she has not yet given her little finger to kiss, no raftsman or woodsman in the mountains groans under such a load. A thousand times I ask myself whether it was not, after all, a piece of folly for me, at my time of life, to join the scholars who are learning her first A B C ; and whether I shall not discover to my horror, after the lapse of many weary years, that all this precious time has been thrown out of the window of Jansen's studio. It is certainly large enough for such a purpose."

" Hm ! " growled the tall lieutenant. " You are sing-

ing a bad song to an old tune. Nowhere do you come across existences that are failures, more frequently than in a city of art like this. It's so damned seductive to go singing—

‘Free, ah, free, is the life we lead,
A life filled full of pleasure—’

and yet, what you say is quite right—he who cannot rule art, him she oppresses; and that to a worse degree than does any duty of life. You, as I know you, don't seem to me quite in your proper place. Both of us ought to have come into the world a few centuries earlier; and then I, as a leader of bandits, after the manner of *Castruccio Castracani*, and you, as a politician of the old energetic and unscrupulous stamp, might not have cut a bad figure. But now, all we can do is to help ourselves as best we can. Now let me tell you something. You have been over-excited, and have lost your spirits. Come out to the lake with me to-morrow. I will introduce you to her young highness. Perhaps you will fall in love with her and find favor in her eyes, and then our little princess and both of us would be made happy at one stroke.”

Felix shook his head with increasing embarrassment. “He was not the man for such company,” he said, in a stammering voice; “*Schnetz* would get little honor by introducing him. He couldn't swear that he wouldn't go out to the lake. He certainly did stand in great need of a change of air. But, unfortunately, he could be of no use to him in entertaining his countesses, baronesses, and young nobles.”

With these words they had shaken hands and parted.

But no sooner did Felix find himself alone than his passionate grief and his old yearning came upon him with such force that he threw all his resolutions to the

winds, and thought only how he could be near her once more. The evening train did not leave for some hours. It would be impossible to wait for it, or to pass the intervening time in any civilized fashion. He hired a horse and mounted, dressed just as he was, and left the town at a sharp trot, without giving notice at his own house of his intended absence, or even taking leave of Jansen.

His horse was none of the best, and was somewhat tired from having been in use before that day. Consequently he was soon obliged to moderate his speed, and had only accomplished half his journey, when the train whirled by him. But he was not at all sorry to have to take the last part of the way at a walk. The nearer he approached his goal, the more conflicting became his feelings. What object had he in coming here at all? He knew that she avoided him, and that she would unquestionably leave this retreat too, if she should form but the slightest suspicion that he was following her, and seeking an opportunity to meet her again. And in what a light must he himself, his pride, his sense of delicacy, appear to her, unless he carefully avoided even the appearance of trying to intrude himself upon the peace that she had won with such difficulty? If she could do without him, ought he to show how painful it still was for him to do without her?

He reined up his horse so sharply that the animal stood still, trembling. All around him were solitary woods, and the road that ran by the side of the railway was utterly deserted. He sprang off, threw the reins over the horse's neck, and threw himself on his back at the side of road, on the thick, dry moss, which sent out a cloud of fragrant dust into the heated air.

Here he lay ; and if his manliness had not forbidden

him, he would have liked nothing better than to relieve himself by a flood of burning tears, like a helpless, unhappy child, to whom some one has shown its favorite plaything and then taken it away again. Instead of yielding to such girlish weakness, he strengthened and stilled his rebellious heart with that defiant spirit which is the man's form of this youthful feebleness. He gnashed his teeth, cast threatening glances up at the tree-tops and the blue dome of the sky, and behaved himself generally in a way so boyish, and so unworthy of the great statesman that Schnetz believed he had detected in him, that even his horse, hearing his wild, disconnected words, and the strange gnashing and raving by which they were accompanied, looked up in amazement from his grazing, and turned his head toward his rider with an expression of silent pity. "Is it any fault of mine," he raved to himself, "that a ridiculous accident has brought her to the very spot where I was on the point of beginning a new life? Must I fly before her, like a fool, the moment this absurd fate brings her near me again? The world is surely large enough for us both; and yet now, though she knows why I have pitched my tent in this particular place, she persists in haunting the immediate neighborhood, so that I can't take a step outside the gates without running the risk of meeting her. What am I saying? Why, I do not dare even to go out to the lake! I am to be cut off from light and air, and left to smother in the Munich dust! In other words, I am to condemn myself to perpetual imprisonment for a crime of which I do not even repent. No! I owe something to myself as well. Why shouldn't I show that I have put the whole affair behind me once for all, and go on living as though certain eyes were no longer in the world? Cannot one person ignore

another? Shall it last forever, this fear of ghosts? As if one couldn't go around a street corner without meeting a dead and buried love!"—he sprang up suddenly, smoothed his hair, and brushed the dust from his coat—"and though her eyes should look down upon me from every window in Starnberg," he cried, "I will ride through the town and laugh at all these apparitions!"

So he swung himself into the saddle again, and rode over the few remaining miles of his journey at a sharp trot. When at last a blue strip of the lake sparkled through the tree-tops, and the houses of the town came into view, a gray, starlit twilight had already settled down; so that, after all, he could ride through the streets between the rows of lighted windows, without any fear of being recognized.

Nevertheless, it was almost a relief to him when, upon inquiry at all of the three inns, he was told that no room could be had for the night. He thought at once of Ros-sel's little country house, of which he had often heard his friends speak. As the way was described to him, he could still arrive there in good time, and before his friends had gone to bed. So he contented himself with a hasty drink after his sultry ride through the woods, handed over his animal to a hostler, who promised to take good care of it, and got under way again.

He had not had the heart to inquire for Irene's villa, though he had thought for a moment of doing so—only that he might avoid it all the more surely. But he did not allow her name to pass his lips. Clinching his teeth, he went his way, past the garden fences and walls. The warm night had enticed every living thing out into the open air. Under the vines and in the summer-houses, on garden-benches and on balconies, old and young sat,

walked, and stood ; and here and there one could hear the clear but subdued sound of girlish laughter, as it suddenly burst forth from whispered conversations or deep silence, like a rocket that starts instantly from a humble fire-work into the dark heaven of night. Some one was playing a cither, to which a man's voice sang a low accompaniment ; from another house a full soprano voice sang Schubert's Erl King, to the loud music of a piano ; and from yet another was heard a violin concerto, with a clarionet *obbligato*. All harmonized as well as the different voices of the birds in the woods, for the sounds were softened and melted into one another by the sultry night air. Involuntarily Felix stood still and listened.

As chance would have it, his eyes rested on a little house from which came no sound of song or music, and which was overhung with exquisite roses, while tall hollyhocks nodded over the garden-fence. In the upper story was a room with a balcony, lit by a hanging-lamp. The door stood wide open, but the brightly-lighted apartment beyond seemed to be quite empty. Of a sudden, just as the clarionet was playing a solo, a shadow entered the bright frame made by the balcony door. A slender, womanly figure stood on the threshold for a moment, then stepped out in full view and leaned over the balustrade. Her features could not be clearly distinguished from the street, and the watcher below still hesitated to believe his beating heart. But now the shadow moved, and turned its face toward the bright door, as if some one in the room had called to it. For a minute or two the outline of a clear-cut profile could be seen sharply defined against the background of light. It was she !—his beating heart had known her sooner than his open eyes ; and now it beat all the more wildly as the apparition disappeared into the

room again as quickly as it had come. So this was the place! Now he knew it—now he could mark the house well, so that he might always carefully avoid it by a wide *détour*. He trembled all over, and his feet would not at first obey him, when he tried to tear himself away and continue his wandering. In his excitement he missed the road that runs along by the lake, and followed the side-road leading to the Seven Springs. It was only when he reached that spot, and found himself in the midst of a swampy thicket, that he became aware of his mistake. Then, with the stars for his guides, he began to search his way back again. But once more he lost the right track; the sweat rolled down his forehead. With laboring breast he forced his way through the thick underbrush; and, panting like a wounded stag, succeeded in reaching a glade from which he could see the railway, and over beyond it, through the tree-tops, the broad surface of the lake, glittering in the moonlight. A signalman whom he met put him upon his way again. He saw that he had already gone far beyond his goal, and his anxiety lest he should disturb his friend by coming to him at so late an hour, quickened his steps. Thus it was that he reached Edward's in the state in which we have already seen him.

But the strength of his youth pulled him through all his troubles overnight. He awoke in the morning with all his senses refreshed from those bright dreams with which the soul, healing silently as her wont is, had striven to restore her shaken balance. Nor did this bright cheerfulness of the morning desert him when he was fully awake, and was forced to admit that matters stood no better with him to-day than on the day before. A feeling of courage made the blood course warmly through

his veins : a secret delight in life, and a quiet confidence which he could not altogether destroy, and which was very different from the boastful courage of the previous day. He opened the window and stood for a long time breathing in the fresh fragrance of the firs. Then he stepped before the easel, on which stood Kohle's cartoon representing the first scene of his legend of Venus, a plan of which, sketched in hasty outlines on a long roll of paper, lay near by. Felix was enough of an artist to appreciate this singular conception, even without an explanation ; and, in his present romantic and excited state, it attracted him wonderfully. He seated himself on the wooden stool before the easel, and became absorbed in the contemplation of this first sheet, which was now almost completed. The beautiful goddess, leading her boy by the hand, had stepped half out of the shadow of a wild and overgrown gorge, and was gazing wonderingly toward a city which could be seen perched on a distant height, with Gothic battlements and towers. A river, which wound around the base of the hill, was spanned by a quaint old bridge, over which moved a long train of merchants with heavily-laden wagons, accompanied by a few travelers. A little further in the background was a shepherd-boy, stretched out on the grass by the side of his flock, playing a reed pipe and gazing dreamily up at the fleecy summer clouds. The figures were sharply and almost harshly outlined, but there was a certain dignity in the whole, that aided in heightening the fantastic charm of the conception, and in holding the thoughts of the observer aloof from the realities of every-day life.

Felix was still lost—as if in a second morning dream—in the contemplation of this fairy world, when he heard a cautious step creep up the narrow stairway, and stop at

his door. He cried "come in," and could not help laughing when he caught sight of Kohle's honest face peering in with an expression as if he feared to find a man in the last stages of illness. Upon his informing his amazed friend that he was in excellent health, and that the picture of the goddess had probably worked this miracle, the artist's features lighted up, and he began, bright morning as it was, to speak of his work in the same spirit of high-strung enthusiasm in which he had fallen asleep the night before, and to give his explanation of the sketches, which, when unrolled, extended across the whole breadth of the studio. Then the fact that Rossel had given him leave to make use of the walls of the dining-room, and had even offered to assist in the painting, had to be communicated to Felix. Then, at last, he told him about the others; how they had risen long ago, and, without waiting for breakfast, had started off for Starnberg—Rosenbusch on matters connected with their love affairs, and in order to make arrangements for effecting a meeting in the afternoon; while Elfinger, who was passionately fond of fishing, had gone to a trout-brook near the Seven Springs, with whose owner he was acquainted—for he insisted upon contributing his share to the day's dinner. The master of the house himself never made his appearance before nine or ten o'clock. He was in the habit of taking his breakfast, and of smoking and reading, in bed; declaring that even then the day was much too long for him not to shorten it by any legitimate stratagem.

But Kohle had not yet finished what he was saying when the stairs once more began to creak, this time under a slower and more ponderous tread. Contrary to his usual habit, Fat Rossel had turned out early, in order to

make inquiries concerning Felix's condition. He had not even taken time to complete his toilet, but came in his dressing-gown, his bare feet thrust into his slippers. He was perceptibly relieved when Felix, looking fresh and bright again, advanced to meet him and shook his hand, really touched that his anxious friend should have sacrificed his comfort for his sake.

"There are good fellows still left in this wretched world," he cried; "and I should be a villain indeed to make their lives uncomfortable. It is true, my friends, all within and about me is not just as it should be. But whoever shall see me drawing down the corners of my mouth and making a long face to-day, let him call me a Nazarene and break his maulstick over my back."

Rossel nodded his head thoughtfully at these words, for this sudden change in the young man's mood did not appear quite natural to him; however, he did not say a word, but seated himself on the stool before the easel—having first laid a pillow on it—in order to study Kohle's designs.

"Hm—hm! So—so! Fine—fine!" were the only critical remarks which he uttered for the space of a quarter of an hour. Then, however, he began to go into details, and, as he did so, all the strange traits of his nature came into view.

For, just as his own fancy was inexhaustible in raising buds that never bore fruit, so too, in regard to the works of others, he had gradually lost the faculty of patiently following the slow maturing of a thought in accordance with the inherent laws and quiet workings of Nature. For young people especially he was dangerous, for he first excited them powerfully, and led them in a perfect reel through a world of artistic problems; and

then, the moment they went to work in earnest upon a particular task, his keenness and superior knowledge disgusted them with the subject they had taken up, by demonstrating to them a variety of other ways and methods in which the theme might be treated even more happily. Then, if they decided to destroy what they had begun, and begin anew according to one of the ways suggested, they found themselves no better off than before, since the one decisive and final solution always receded farther and farther into unattainable distance. In this way they lost all disposition to strike out boldly and energetically; became hair-splitters and theorists after the style of their master; or, if they did not possess enough mind or money for this, they gave themselves up in their desperation to mere mechanical work, which they pursued in secret, taking good care never to knock again at the door of their former oracle with a question about art.

"There is no one who sees into a picture, or out of it again, as quickly as Rossel," Jansen had once said, and Felix now had an unusually good opportunity of observing the force of this remark, in the manner in which Rossel examined Kohle's designs. For since, in this case, the critic was himself to lend a helping hand, his fancy was even more active than usual in rearranging what had been done, in order that it might, as far as possible, appropriate the picture to itself. How the light effect was to be arranged for every picture, what problems of color would enter into the question, how Giorgione would probably have composed the background, and what effect it would have if, for instance, the whole first scene should be transposed from broad day into evening twilight—all these questions were weighed in the most serious fashion;

while all the while the position of the figures, the way in which the space was divided, and the landscape, were so mercilessly changed about, that finally the new conception of the work had scarcely anything in common with the original plan, except the mere subject.

Nor was even this last point to be regarded as definitely settled, but was merely to be looked upon as a basis for further consideration. But, while Kohle's face kept growing longer and more anxious, that of his fellow-laborer beamed with growing satisfaction. Every muscle in it quivered with intellectual life, and his black eyes flashed with genuine enthusiasm from beneath his white forehead. When finally he rose, he extended his arms above his head and cried :

"There is nothing finer than a good work which has been taken hold of at the right end. You shall see, Kohle—the thing will go. I take such pleasure in it that I would begin to-day—at once, if it didn't happen to be Sunday and I had not, before all things, to play the attentive host. However, you will have quite enough to do in making the changes in the cartoon. In the meanwhile I will assist my household dragon in composing a bill of fare—a thing which will take more thought, let me tell you, than even our dame Venus."

As soon as he had gone the two looked at one another, and Felix could not help bursting into a loud laugh, in which poor Kohle joined—at least with a pathetic smile.

"Now you see what comes of being too wise about anything," said he, regarding his sketch with a sigh. "When, in my stupidity, I went straight on following my *certa idea*, or even my nose, something came of it at all events. But after these criticisms, which were, by-the-way, all excellent and capital and appropriate, I am

afraid the whole thing will go to the deuce again ! If it were not for the beautiful wall down stairs I would tell him candidly that so ill-mated a span—as ill-matched as an ox and horse—would never drag the plough very far. Better to let the lean horse do the work alone, even though the furrows should not be quite so smooth. Alas, alas, alas ! My poor dame Venus !”

CHAPTER IV.

NEVERTHELESS, the creative instinct was too powerful in him to let his depression at the interference of this eternal waverer affect him long, or sap his strength. In the very midst of his upbraiding, after he had angrily thrown the first sheet into a corner, he took a second frame of card-board, and began to sketch the scene where the homeless beauty, with her naked boy, is standing at the gate of the convent, surrounded by the staring nuns, whose looks and attitudes express doubt and suspicion. Felix threw himself on his couch again, and lay smoking, rarely throwing in a word, as he watched every movement of the other's hand. The proximity of this man, who was self-reliant, so humble, and yet so constantly striving at some lofty aim, exercised a singularly soothing influence upon Felix's restless soul. He confessed this, when Kohle began to express surprise that any one should leave the town, head over heels in this way, and rush into the country, in order, when he arrived there, to shut himself up in a sunless garret room, and look on while a man painfully trundled his barrow over a hard

road, toward a goal of art which is generally supposed to have long since been left behind.

"My dear Kohle," he said, "only let me stay here. I should like very much to learn something from you which would be of more benefit to me than a walk or a bath in the lake—namely, your art of knowing just what you want, and of wanting nothing which you cannot have. Was this art born in you, or have you gradually acquired it, and paid your instruction-fee for it, as for other arts?"

"The best part of it is inborn," answered Kohle, quietly going on with his sketching. "You must know that I came into this world as poor as a church-mouse, and endowed with so small a proportion of all the goods and gifts that fall to the share of so-called fortunate mortals, the first-born and favorite children of Mother Nature, that, in my boyhood, I had little pleasure in life, and would have parted with it very cheaply. But then I discovered that I possessed something which out-weighed all the glittering treasures in the world—such as beauty, wealth, wit, or great intellect. I mean the ability to dream with my eyes wide open, and to interpret my dreams for myself. The actual world, with its joys and splendors, was as good as closed against a poor devil like myself. How could such a wretched creature as this Philip Emanuel Kohle, this lean, yellow ragamuffin in poor clothes, who stumbled awkwardly through the world, and who could neither fascinate women nor impress men, have the impudence to take his place at the bounteous table at which the children of fortune felt at home? So I held myself aloof, and earnestly and zealously set to work to evolve a second world from my dreams—one which belonged to me, and from which no one could bid me depart—a world which was far more

beautiful, sublime, and perfect, than the actual world about me. And as I wasted no time or strength on anything else—neither in wretched money-getting, nor in foolish ambition, nor even in hopeless love affairs—my nature grew up straight and true, and in the greatest development of which it was capable, which is by no means the case with every one ; and I could not help laughing in my sleeve, when I noticed that I passed among my friends for a simpleton and a narrow-minded fool. The truth is, my simpleness was the very thing that contributed most to my secret contentment, when I saw how seldom the manifold desires and restless striving of others led to happiness. '*Chi troppo abbraccia, nulla stringe,*' say the wise Italians. I embrace nothing but my art ; but I embrace it the more passionately because it exists for me alone. There you have the whole secret. There is a juster apportionment of good and evil in this world than we are willing to admit in our hours of depression."

Felix was silent. It was on the tip of his tongue to say that he envied him. Yet he felt at once how thoroughly right this quiet man was in his last assertion. He felt that he would not, for all the peace in the world, have given up his own miserable condition ; for, at the same time that it gave him the keenest anguish, it brought with it the certainty that so charming a creature as his lost love was still in the world, and had been brought so painfully near to him again.

When noon came, they were called down into the garden by the white-haired old woman, who, in her sober moments, was a most excellent and active servant. The table was laid in a shady arbor near the house. Rosenbusch and the actor had returned from their different expeditions ; the latter with a basket full of excellent trout,

and the other with a face which showed plainly enough that he too had not come back unsuccessful, but had gained all he had promised himself from his morning walk. He was in full gala-dress, consisting of his violet-colored velvet coat, a white waistcoat, and a gigantic Panama hat, beneath which his hair and his red beard, which had been shorn to so little purpose, had already begun to sprout again. His honest, merry, handsome face was radiant with good-humor ; and as Elfinger did his best to be entertaining, and Felix to make up for the alarm he had occasioned on the previous day, the meal was enlivened by all sorts of jollity and good stories.

Nor was there, for that matter, any lack of more substantial dainties ; and Kohle, who had voluntarily taken upon himself the office of butler, ran out every few minutes to fetch up another dusty bottle ; for Rossel, who was a light drinker himself, had a sort of passion for collecting the rarest brands of wine in his cellar, if only a small supply of each. It was not long before the programme which had been prepared for the afternoon leaked out. They proposed to row over to Starnberg in Rossel's pretty little boat, to land there, and then, while strolling along the shore, to encounter, as if by pure accident, the two sisters, who were to go out with their aunt, under the pretext of taking a walk. Then, upon a polite invitation, they were all to get into the boat again together, and be rowed out upon the lake, in whichever direction circumstances and the mood of the moment might suggest.

Rossel pronounced this plan to be very wisely conceived, but flatly refused to take part in it. He had an aversion, founded on principle, to all pic-nics, especially where there were ladies whom one was obliged to treat

with politeness and consideration, relinquishing to them the most comfortable places and the daintiest morsels. For lovers this was no sacrifice, since they could indemnify themselves in other ways. But such a restraint could not be imposed upon free and independent natures without great injustice. He would, therefore, remain at home until the day grew cooler, and study Regis's translation of Rabelais, which he had long had in mind to illustrate. Toward evening he would stroll into the wood in order to take a look at his mushroom-bed ; for he had made it his especial task to forward the culture of the mushroom in the woods about Starnberg, as well as the general improvement and introduction of all edible fungi. Then, when they came home late at night, intoxicated with sour beer and sweet words, a supper should await them that would be "worth the toil of princes."

Felix, too, would gladly have remained behind. But there was no way for him to do this without betraying his secret. And, besides, what else could he do to quiet his secret yearning—since it was impossible for him to approach her by daylight? He secretly consoled himself by the thought that, when they returned, late in the evening, he would creep to the garden-fence again, and watch the bright room leading off the balcony.

Philip Emanuel Kohle's feeble attempt to excuse himself, because of his bashfulness in ladies' society, was clamorously voted down. As he was, moreover, the only one of the party who carried a chart of the lake in his head, he could not find it in his heart to desert his friends.

There was a thunder-storm in the air, but it looked as though it had come to a halt in the west, and would pass off harmlessly. The sky was dark and lowering, and the lake was as smooth as a mirror, when the light

but roomy boat shot out of the little bay. Rossel stood on the shore, waving his handkerchief and fez. Kohle sat at the tiller, Elfinger rowed, and Rosenbusch, as they glided along past the green banks, took advantage of the permit Rossel had given him, to play upon his flute some of his most pastoral melodies—doubly melting this time, for he was on his way to his sweetheart's side, and to Heaven knows what romantic adventures.

CHAPTER V.

THEY had scarcely landed at the end of the lake when they saw in the distance the three figures they were looking for, strolling slowly along the road that circled the shore. When within hailing distance, the prearranged farce of a chance meeting and recognition was played with the utmost seriousness, and it was impossible to detect, from the godmother's manner, whether she had accepted a *rôle* in the comedy, or whether she innocently believed that the two gentlemen who lived opposite the sisters in the city had merely seized this opportunity to exchange a word or two with their lovely neighbors for the first time. The girls bore themselves in accordance with their respective characters—the elder quiet and sparing of words, the younger gay and coquettish even to audacity. They were dressed charmingly, and indeed almost elegantly; but Fanny wore dark ribbons, while Nanny's little hat was adorned with a red rose and trimmings of the same color. The battle-painter had warned the good Kohle at the dinner-table against the godmother, as a pious creature, enthusiastic about art and notorious

for enticing into her net innocent young painters of a serious turn of mind. But she was, in fact, a pleasant little soul enough, far on in the thirties. She had lost her husband, a well-to-do confectioner, shortly after their marriage, and was fond of protesting, with many sighs, that she never, never could forget him. A Gothic temple, made of sugar and adorned with numerous figures of saints, which he had made for their marriage, as a sort of triumph of his art, still stood in a state of good preservation under a glass case upon her sideboard. Nevertheless rumor said of her that she had not always harshly repulsed the numerous offers she had received as a widow, though she had been too wise to give the slightest cause for public gossip. Certain ecclesiastical gentlemen, who were in the habit of going in and out of her house, gave her the best certificate of character; and though she did not close her door to young artists, she took care to see that they were proper, respectable people, who painted church pictures with long robes, and did not wear their shirt-collars after the fashion of too erratic genius; and that they held aloof from all pagan theories of art. To this godly way of life she owed it that her own godmother, the glove-maker's wife, had trusted her with "the children" for a day, although some malicious people pretended to think that to go gadding into the country was not exactly the thing for well-preserved widows.

She was quite modestly dressed, but yet in such a way that her figure, already somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*, was shown to the best advantage. In her manner she kept a wise mean between the severe dignity which a God-fearing woman of an uncertain age usually maintains toward youthful giddiness, and a too free approval of the

pranks that danced through her godchild's head. At the same time she did not try to keep the silent Felix from knowing that his slim, manly form had made an impression on her; though she was wise enough to do it so slyly as to give a motherly sort of aspect to her interest in him. It was only when the ungrateful man, whose poor soul was quite unconscious of its conquest, continued to walk at her side in complacent abstraction, casting furtive glances all around to see whether he was running directly in the way of her whom he must especially avoid—then only did she withdraw her favor from him and bestow it upon the insignificant Kohle, whom Rosenbusch had introduced to her as a painter of the severest style, a disciple of the great Cornelius, and one whom she needed only to make a better Christian in order to win in him a new pillar of ecclesiastical art. Kohle submitted to it all with a most patient smile, and really began to pay pronounced attention to this stately creature as well as he knew how, merely that he might not seem to stand in the way of the others' sport.

They had been strolling up and down the shore for about a quarter of an hour in this way, when, as if without the slightest premeditation, the proposal was made that they should take an excursion on the water; a proposal which was accepted after a good deal of well-acted hesitation on the part of the godmother, and much entreating and flattering and coaxing on the part of the blonde Nanny.

Soon afterward the boat, with its merry freight, shot out upon the sunny lake, rowed now by Felix, who had had occasion to exercise this noble art on many waters of the Old World and the New. Kohle sat at the tiller and thought only of his dame Venus, notwithstanding the

nearness of the beautiful art-enthusiast who was opposite him. The two pairs of lovers occupied the middle seats, Elfinger gazing devotedly on the lovely face of his neighbor, who let her little white hand trail through the green water, and seemed to-day to enjoy the beauty of this world with all her heart. She held a large sunshade over her head in such a way that her companion might also profit by its shade; the first favor she had ever bestowed upon him, and one which made its modest recipient very happy. Her vivacious sister, on the other hand, maintained that Rosenbusch's great hat was really a family straw-hat, and could afford protection against sunstroke to a whole ship's crew. She freely exposed her laughing face to the sun, bound a white handkerchief to her sunshade, which she planted like a flagstaff between herself and her adorer, and declared that she was looking forward with great pleasure to the storm which was undoubtedly about to burst forth and bury them all in the depths of the lake, with the exception of those who could swim—swimming being a great passion of her own. She also offered to save one of the others, only it must not be Rosenbusch, whose velvet coat was too heavy, and would certainly drag down its owner.

Aunt Babette—for this was the godmother's name—attempted now and then to give her a reproving glance. But, as no one took the slightest notice of this, she made up her mind to become young and worldly again herself, particularly as the heat made all restraint doubly burdensome. She unwound the lace shawl from her round shoulders, drew off her gloves and untied her ribbons, so that she looked in her *négligé* almost as young and certainly as full of life as the serious Fanny. She laughed even louder than the two girls at the jests and tricks

which Rosenbusch displayed for their amusement. He was celebrated for his power of mimicking the whirring of a quail, the cackling of a hen, and the noise of a saw. He told long and ridiculous stories in different dialects, and delivered a sermon, with the most solemn pulpit utterance, in a senseless jargon which he gave out to be English. But his great masterpiece was a pantomimic scene representing nuns praying at their nightly devotions. To do this he bound a handkerchief round his head, and wrapped himself up in a lady's cloak so that only his eyes, the tip of his nose, and his hands—folded over his breast—were left visible, and then began with hypocritical zeal and constant change of expression to roll his eyes and nod his head and murmur over his rosary, now as an antiquated, dozing nun, who kept dropping off to sleep between her prayers; now as a deeply contrite and extravagantly penitent sinner, and again as a well-to-do sister, grown gray in the convent, who had long since learned to regard the matter from its practical side, and refrained from unnecessary exertion, but strove from time to time to keep up her spirits by taking a stolen pinch of snuff.

This amateur exhibition had worked so irresistibly that even the worthy godmother nearly lost her balance from laughter, and had to be supported by Kohle; and it was only when the show had come to an end that it seemed to strike the conscience of its mischievous author that he might possibly have offended Elfinger's devout *fiancée* by this absurd parody. Whereupon, assuming an air of mock contrition, he begged a thousand pardons of Fräulein Fanny, while in secret he reckoned it as a good work to have given her a foretaste of the joys that awaited her. Then, as if in penance for his offense, he

suddenly began to play the "*O Sanctissima*" upon his flute, with such beauty and pathos that even the wild Nanny grew serious, and began to sing a gentle accompaniment, in which her sister joined.

It rang out sweetly over the lonely, brooding stillness of the lake, so that they did not end with this first song, but followed each other with their favorite airs.

Elfinger sang an excellent tenor, and took great pains to make his song strike home to the heart of his lovely neighbor. The two rowers alone were dumb, though they had drawn in their oars upon getting well out upon the water. Kohle had no more voice than a crow, and Felix felt as if his breast were encircled by the seven girdles of the legend.

As they floated along thus peacefully and quietly, a west wind sprung up, and carried them unnoticed toward the opposite shore, where a much-frequented garden-restaurant smiled on them from out the verdure of a gently-sloping bank. Elfinger proposed that they should land here and drink some coffee—a suggestion to which no one had an objection to offer. And while they drifted slowly toward the shore he closed the entertainment with a song which Rosenbusch had once written for one of their feasts in "Paradise." It went to the tune of a popular melody, and the author accompanied it skillfully on his flute.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE the few stanzas of the song were sung, they had approached so close to the bank that the people in the garden, where a mixed Sunday company was collected,

could hear the flute, and could even catch the words. Some of the guests had left their places in order to take a nearer look at the musicians ; and as Rosenbusch had a large circle of acquaintances, he was enthusiastically greeted on all sides. With an air of complacent self-importance, he conducted his lady, who was suddenly overcome with fear lest she too might be recognized and reported to her father, to the only table which was still unoccupied. The others followed ; Felix alone remained behind for a few minutes at the boat to repair some trifling damage to the rudder.

Then, as he started after his friends, seeking them in the crowd from table to table, until he finally caught sight of Nanny's coquettish little hat with the red rose by the side of the white "family straw" of her cavalier—what was it that made him suddenly stand still in the scorching sun, with his eyes fixed upon a little summer-house, in which six persons were sitting about a round table ?

It was the shadiest spot in the garden, and the party within had caused it to be distinctly understood that they had no intention of admitting any others, by occupying all the chairs that were still vacant with their hats, umbrellas, and canes. Nearest the entrance, like a sentry, sat the tall, lank figure of the lieutenant, in his well-known riding-coat ; and at his side a slender young lady with downcast eyes, as if, in the midst of all this confused buzz and hum of conversation, she were occupied only with her own thoughts.

Just then Schnetz addressed some remark to her, and she looked up and let her glance wander over the garden. Thus it happened that her gaze met that of the young man who was standing so conspicuously in the sun. It is

true, he instantly lowered his eyes ; but he had already been recognized, and could no longer think of retreating unnoticed. Besides, at that very moment he felt himself touched on the arm by Kohle, who had been up to the restaurant in the mean while to order coffee.

“What are you standing here for?” cried his busy friend. “Come and help me entertain the Frau god-mother, who is boring me to death with her talk about the black Madonna in Altötting, just from pure spite because you play St. Anthony to her.”

Felix stammered out a few unintelligible words and allowed himself to be dragged away. The chair which they had reserved next to Aunt Babette stood, fortunately, with its back toward the summer-house. But scarcely had he seated himself in it when Rosenbusch began : “Have you seen our lieutenant, baron ? This respected amphibion is taking his dry day to-day among the nobler fowl, and appears, to judge from his disconsolate air, to be gazing with longing at our moist element. What a joke it would be if I should go up and beg him to introduce me to the old countess and the young baroness ! The latter would probably remember having met me at that *soirée* at the Russian lady’s, where you left me to make love to her alone.”

Whereupon he gave the girls and their godmother a detailed account of the musical entertainment, and of his conversation with Irene. Little Nanny, who had possibly been infected by some of papa’s prejudices in regard to art, should be made to understand how highly a battle-painter is regarded in the highest social circles, and what an enviable position would be accorded to her as his wife. But the lively girl did not appear to form a very exalted idea of his success.

"Are you quite sure, Herr Rosenbusch," she said, "that they recognized you again? The beautiful Fräulein scarcely moved her head when you took off your hat to her, as though she meant to say, 'You are undoubtedly mistaken in the person, sir.'"

"It was merely her surprise, and a passing feeling of displeasure at seeing me approach in such charming company. She may have attributed too much meaning to the pretty speeches I made to her that night. These high-born Fräuleins are devilish sensitive, and for that reason I now refrain from speaking to her. But why don't you go over and introduce yourself to the ladies, my dear baron—you who have blue blood as well as they?"

Just at this moment Schnetz, in all his lankness, stepped up to their table and greeted the ladies with formal politeness, at the same time shaking hands with his friends. The fact that he should meet Felix here did not seem to strike him as strange.

"You happy mortals!" he growled out, biting his cigar, and pulling his hat down lower over his forehead, while he withdrew a little distance from the rest with Felix and Elfinger. "You all get on so capitally together, and it does one good to hear you laugh so heartily; while we are keeping up the usual sort of conventional twaddle, which consists, upon my soul, in each one's saying nothing which the others could not have said as well. They have just been wondering, behind my back, that I should have anything whatever to do with you people, whom they look upon as *mauvais genre*. A few artists and two pretty girls, at whose papa's Madame the Countess buys her gloves—*quelle horreur!* But the ladies are not so bad; even the young countess, with the

fixed dimples in her highly-colored cheeks—by Heaven ! little Fanny over there looks ten times as much like a countess—even she is a good child, *au fond*, and the right sort of a husband might still make something of her. . But as for that cousin of hers, to whom she is as good as engaged, and the other young nobleman, with the imperial and the heavy manner—between ourselves, he is dead in love with my little princess, who scarcely honors him with a look—*tonnerre de Dieu!* what nice specimens they are of our high-born youth ! And to think of my being condemned to go about among them without treading on their toes ! Thus are the sins of the fathers visited upon the children ! The first Schnetz who, whether as marshal or hostler, helped an Agilolfinger into the saddle, has it on his conscience that I, the unworthiest of his descendants, still belong with the rest of them, hard as I try to make myself disagreeable and even unbearable.”

They agreed to meet again in the evening at Ros-sel's villa, and then returned to their respective parties. But our friends soon grew impatient of quietly sitting at table over their coffee. The neighboring wood invited the lovers where they could be free from chaperonage, and Aunt Babette was paying too close attention to an exposition of art by the “interesting young man,” as she called Kohle, to take any heed of the fact that Rosebud and Nanny occasionally disappeared from view entirely, while Fanny anxiously insisted upon not getting out of sight of the others.

Felix soon lost himself in a lonely side-path. His heart was hot within him, and wild plans chased one another through his brain. He realized only too well that matters could not go on in this way ; that this state of

indecision *after* the decision would soon drive him to despair. If the old world really was not large enough for him to avoid one woman in, the ocean must separate them again, and this time forever. What he was to do over there ; how he could justify his resolution to Jansen, or reconcile it with his choice of art as a profession, or with his own pride, were questions which were still enveloped in darkness. But as for tamely submitting, and allowing himself to be made a fool of by capricious fortune, which seemed as if it had deliberately set itself to work to bring the two lovers together on every possible occasion—to this he would never consent !

Whether he himself had not played into the hands of chance a little, yesterday, was a question he did not ask.

A distant peal of thunder, rolling toward him from the west, suddenly roused him from these confused and bitter thoughts. The sky above the tree-tops was still blue, but was overcast by that light, lead-colored haze which precedes an approaching storm. There was no time to waste if they wanted to get across the lake before the storm should break. For already the air held its breath so utterly that not a leaf rustled on the trees, and not even the note of a bird was heard. The lake, along the banks of which Felix was hastening, was still unruffled by a breath of wind ; but its mid-waters were black with the reflection of the heavy, low-hanging cloud that spread over the heaven like a gigantic slab hewn from a single block of slate. Behind it, the bright sunlight still glowed on the horizon, and the distant mountain chain shone out in the delicate green of spring, as if bathed in eternal peace.

The approach of the storm had been observed by the people in the garden, and most of the guests had been

prudent enough to embark on the steamboat which had just left, and was now half-way over to Starnberg. But by the time Felix had joined his friends again it was too late for them to choose this shorter way. Besides, Ros-sel's villa was a good deal nearer than the Starnberg station, and Rosenbusch, who always had his head full of adventures, was already dreaming of the improvised quarters for the night, which should be prepared for the ladies in the dining-room. He took very good care, however, not to give utterance to these romantic projects, but merely urged a hasty departure, in order that they might escape the rain.

When they reached the landing-place, they found Schnetz and his party engaged in an annoying scene.

The young boatman who had rowed them over flatly refused to start on the return trip, in view of the storm that threatened to break upon them at any moment. The boat was too heavily loaded to get over the water quickly, and his master had given him a bad pair of oars, the good ones having been sent off with another boat early in the morning. The gentlemen might offer him what they liked, but he would not make the trip; he knew what he was saying, and what it meant "when the lake and the sky came so near together."

One of the young gentlemen was addressing the lad—who was a neatly-dressed young fellow, and wished, perhaps, to spare his Sunday clothes—in rough and imperious tones, commanding him to obey without further parley, and to leave the responsibility to them. The lake was as smooth as a mirror, and there was so little wind that the storm might very likely be an hour in reaching them. But when, upon the boatman's remaining obstinate, he tried to wrench the oar from the defiant fellow's

hand, saying that, if a lout like him had no pluck, he might at least get out of the way and take himself to the devil—all the man's pent-up fury and insulted *amour propre* burst out ; with an angry answer in the most forcible epithets of his country dialect, he threw the oar at the young count's feet, took his jacket out of the boat, and, with a malicious grin, wishing the company a pleasant journey, started off toward the highway which winds along by the lake-shore.

"The thunder-storm comes just right for him," said the waiter-girl, who had been attracted to the spot by the quarrel, and who now stood gazing after the angry fellow as he hurried away. "The ladies and gentlemen mustn't think that Hiesl had started to run back to his father's on foot ; he knew well enough there was going to be a wedding celebrated in Ambach, and had been impatient to get there for some time ; for the red-haired waiter-girl in the tavern there had completely turned his head, and all because she wouldn't have anything to do with him—though he would marry her on the spot if she would take him, and he was not one to be sneezed at either, and was earning a good living too. So he had caught at the pretext that the storm would be upon them before the party could get back to Starnberg again, and was on his way as fast as his legs would carry him, so as to get to Ambach, which was nearly an hour from here, with a dry skin. Oh ! these men !"

She seemed to think it very foolish for him to run so far, when he could find all he wanted close at hand. But in reply to their question, whether there really was so much danger of the storm, she gave the most comforting assurances ; it might not reach them for several hours

yet, and, very likely, if a wind should spring up it would pass over altogether.

The young count, who now regarded it as a matter of honor to undertake the trip and to outshine the obstinate boor by his superior skill as a boatman, allayed all the old countess's doubts and fears; and the young people did not shrink from a trifling lake-storm, particularly as Schnetz, who was filled with horror at the bare thought of staying here overnight, declared that there was not the slightest reason for anxiety. He himself would take charge of the tiller as he had done when they came out, and in half an hour they would undoubtedly be landed safe and sound at the opposite bank.

The whole scene had taken place so near the spot where the artists and their companions stood, that not a word had escaped them. They were, however, in even less of a humor to let themselves be frightened by the distant growling of the heavens, and had already rowed out quite a little distance into the lake before the more aristocratic boat shoved off from shore. Felix bent to his oar with redoubled energy in order to put as much water as possible between himself and his beloved enemy, and it looked as though they would reach the opposite shore in half the time usually needed for the passage.

Nevertheless, it was strange that on this return voyage such a deep silence should have succeeded to the high spirits with which they had first rowed over. Even Rosenbusch said nothing, but contented himself with casting the most eloquent glances at his sweetheart, who now sat silent and pensive, with her head resting on her sister's shoulder. Elfinger and his beloved looked away from one another down into the dark water; and only Aunt Babette gave a little scream from time to time when a

vivid flash of lightning tore zigzag through the blue-black clouds, and illuminated the woods on the bank in a green, ghastly glare.

The young nobleman in the other boat pulled a good oar. He was a handsome, chivalrous young fellow, who certainly did not deserve the contempt with which Schnetz had spoken of him. In order that the ladies who had intrusted themselves to his care might be landed in safety as soon as possible, he sought to overtake the other boat, in spite of its lead. But his powerful exertions came to an end in a very unexpected way. One of the oars, rotten with age, suddenly broke short off in the middle ; and at the same instant the first gust of wind swept with a melancholy howl across the surface of the lake, which, as if transformed by the touch of a magician's wand, began suddenly to surge like a miniature raging ocean.

Schnetz rose from his seat at the tiller.

"I entreat the ladies not to prove false to the coolness they have thus far shown, because of this little accident," he said. "We could undoubtedly get across even without a second oar. But to have one will be better. I will inquire of my artist friends over yonder if they haven't one to spare."

He wore a little metal whistle, suspended by a green cord from a button on his waistcoat. With this he piped a sort of boatswain's signal.

Elfinger started. "That is Roland's call !" he said, seriously. "What can he want of us ?"

Felix raised his oar from the water ; the two boats approached one another.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Schnetz, "allow me, first of all, to make you acquainted with one another, as well as such a thing can be done on such a rocking floor,

and without the customary bows. I have the honor, ladies, to introduce you to my friend Baron Felix von Weiblingen, who has just deserted a diplomatic career for the liberal arts, and, as you perceive, knows how to handle the oar as skillfully as the chisel and modeling-tool. Herr Graf —, Herr Baron —, Messieurs Rosenbusch and Elfinger—the ladies, I understand, are already known to one another. Look here, baron, can't you help us out with an oar? One of ours has come to grief. We have suffered a slight shipwreck."

Felix stood up. Although the waves rocked the little boat violently, his slender, powerful figure stood out strong and erect against the black, stormy sky. At the approach of danger he had recovered all his coolness and confidence, qualities which he had often enough had a chance to test in his adventurous journeyings through the solitudes of the New World. Even the face opposite him in the other boat, the pale oval framed by the hood of a gray cloak from beneath which straggled a brown lock—even the glance of those eyes, which preferred to gaze down into the dark, tempestuous depths rather than to meet his—nothing could shake his coolness now when the time had come for him to show himself master of the moment.

"We carry a few extra oars with us, it is true," he shouted back, raising his voice, for the storm began to howl louder and louder. "But I should prefer to help you with them in our own boat—Elfinger is an excellent oarsman—and to fasten your craft to ours. Then we will take you in tow, and the passage will be much safer and quicker; for your boat is a flat-bottomed, badly-built affair, without keel or cut-water, and all you gentlemen are in it for the first time."

"Agreed!" roared Schnetz in return. "Let us connect ourselves with our *remorqueur* with all possible speed, and then *vogue la galère!*"

Rossel's well-equipped craft had, fortunately, a good supply of ropes at hand, so that Kohle, from his seat at the stern, soon drew the drifting boat up to his own and made it fast with a firm knot. Then Felix and Elfinger bent to their oars, and their four strong arms seemed to drive the two boats as if in sport over the raging surface of the water.

Not a word was spoken in either vessel. To the countess's whispered question to Irene: whether this young baron belonged to the well-known Weiblings in D—, there came no answer. The young countess had grown as pale as her high-colored complexion would permit. Her cousin sought to conceal his ill-humor at the accident, by trying to light a cigar; but the wind was too much for him. In the first boat, too, a breathless silence reigned. Rosenbusch alone bent over from time to time, and whispered a few words to his blonde sweetheart, but they were lost forever in the storm. The gale raged above their heads with increasing fury, lightning and thunder burst almost continuously from the black clouds, and the blast, as it whirled the tumult through the sky, seemed so violent that the clouds had no time to dissolve in rain. All around the shore lay wrapped in darkness, and in the south, where gusts of rain mingled the sky and lake together, every trace of the mountain line had disappeared.

Suddenly Felix's voice made itself heard at the extreme end of the little flotilla: "I think it advisable, Schnetz, for us to change our course. Otherwise we shall tire ourselves out pulling against this head-wind without making any progress westward. In spite of all our exer-

tions, we haven't reached the middle of the lake yet, and, as we may expect a deluge at any moment, I would propose, in the interest of the ladies, that we turn about and try to reach the land quickly at any price. What do you say?"

"That we have no voice whatever in the matter!" Schnetz shouted back. "In a storm the captain commands upon his own responsibility! and with that, enough said!"

A strong shove of the tiller showed that Kohle had decided in favor of silent obedience. The good effects of the change were felt immediately; for now the two boats, sailing with the current and the wind, skimmed as though with wings over the high waves.

But they already had been driven too far toward the south to reach their old harbor again. When they had approached near enough to the bank to distinguish trees and houses, they saw a scene which they did not recognize—an inn close upon the lake, from whose windows streamed a bright light and the merry sound of dance-music.

"We have arrived just in time for the wedding," growled Schnetz. "If we don't go to the devil first, we can while away the time by dancing—the best way to get rid of all the bad effects of our fright. May I have the honor, countess, of engaging you for a cotillon?"

The old lady, who had been suffering the keenest alarm, and had secretly made all sorts of vows to her patron saints, drew a long breath of relief, and said, laughing nervously: "If anything had happened to us, *mon cher* Schnetz, your godlessness would have been to blame for sending so many good people to the bottom. Well, *Dieu soit loué, nous voilà sains et saufs*. Melanie, your

hair is atrociously disordered. How have you borne it, my dear Irene?"

"I was not afraid. Still I shall be glad to get on shore."

And, indeed, just at this moment, the rain-drops began to fall one by one on the broad surface of the lake.

Another quarter of an hour of vigorous work at the oars and the foremost boat passed through the surf of the flat shore and ran up on the beach. Felix sprang on shore and helped out the sisters and the godmother. When it came to the turn of the party in the other boat, he left to his friends the duty of setting the ladies ashore dry-shod, while he busied himself in fastening the two boats to posts upon the bank.

The old countess came up to him, overflowing with earnest assurances of her gratitude, which he politely put aside. Upon her presently repeating her inquiry about his family, he dryly replied :

"I come from beyond the sea, countess, and have left my family tree in the backwoods. But you will get wet if you stay out here any longer. My friend, Herr Kohle, will have the honor of conducting you into the house. It is well known that a captain must not leave his ship until it lies safe at anchor."

The good lady wondered to herself that a young man, who seemed to be so *comme il faut*, should relinquish the honor of becoming her knight to a *bourgeois*. But as she was rather confused and helpless, and did not exactly know where to look for her son and son-in-law, she accepted the painter's arm with condescending amiability, and, turning around every instant to see that her daughter was following, she hastened toward the house, in which the music had not ceased for a moment.

Schnetz had taken possession of the two sisters, and the young count approached Irene to conduct her into the house. But she declined his proffered arm with a gesture of thanks, wrapped herself closer in her cloak, and hastened after the others.

She had not looked around at Felix, but at the threshold she hesitated. Perhaps her beating heart was secretly whispering to her to turn, rush into the storm and rain, and call to the lonely man upon the shore.

Just at this moment her cousin turned to her with some casual question, laid a hand upon her arm, and drew her across the hall into the guests' room. She threw back her head with such a hasty movement, that her hood fell off. Her young face, which she had learned only too well how to keep under control, became cold and stern, and the moment which might have broken the ice passed away unused.

CHAPTER VII.

NOR had Felix looked around at Irene. And yet he knew exactly when she entered the door, and vanished into the house.

His work on the shore had long been completed. The two boats were fastened securely to their chains, and the heavy surf bumped their wooden sides against one another with a dull, monotonous sound. It was by no means pleasant here in the rain. The drops fell thicker and faster; leaves and twigs were torn from the trees near the boat-house, and sent whirling far and wide. And yet this lonely man here in the storm could not even now make up his mind to seek refuge in the house, which stood be-

fore him with its bright windows looking so hospitable and cozy, and protecting a crowd of happy beings from the furies of the gale.

He was just considering whether he should not retreat into one of the boats which, lying under the roof of the boat-house, would at least offer him a dry place of refuge, when a vivid flash of lightning lit up the darkness around, and in the next instant, even before the thunder-clap had time to follow, he heard a scoffing laugh, not far away. He saw now that he was not quite alone. On the bridge of the steamboat-landing, which was built on piles and ran out for some distance into the lake, stood the young boatman who, an hour before, had foretold the storm, and had refused to make the return journey. As if he felt at home amid this whirlwind, he stood there in his shirt-sleeves, his jacket thrown over his shoulder, bareheaded, smoking a short pipe, and leaning upon the railing of the bridge. His eyes were fixed with an evil, piercing fire upon Felix, whom he had probably mistaken for the young count because he had been busied with the boats. As soon as the noise of the thunder had died away, he burst out anew in a loud, scoffing laugh. "So Hiesl is a stupid boor, and doesn't know anything—not even his own business? He ought to learn it from the city gentlemen? Ha, ha, ha! I only wish you had had all the flesh washed off your bones. Ha, ha, ha! Well, look sharp now, and carry the thing through. It's just jolly inside there, and perhaps next time Heaven will have sense enough to—"

The howling of the storm drowned the rest of his speech. Felix had a sharp reply on the tip of his tongue, with which to rebuke the fellow, and at the same time to show him that he had made a mistake in the person. But now the tempest broke in such a terrible deluge of rain

that he was absolutely deprived of sight and hearing, and had to grope his way to reach the house with a tolerably dry skin.

The heavy house-door was torn from its chain by the storm, and closed behind him with a deafening crash. In the lower entry a number of people sat at little tables hung on hinges along the wall, and just large enough to hold the plates and beer-mugs. A country waiting-maid, who was coming out of the kitchen, told Felix that his party were up-stairs dancing, and asked whether he wanted anything. He silently shook his head, and slowly ascended the stairs; not with the intention of joining his friends, but merely to find where *she* was, and which room of the house it would be necessary for him to avoid.

Not a soul was to be seen in the dimly-lighted hall above; but all the doors stood open on account of the heat, and poured forth a mixture of lamp-light, smoke, and noise, while the floor creaked under the regular tread of the dancers, and the air trembled with the surly grumbling of a gigantic bass-viol. The dancing-hall lay at the extreme end of the corridor. Felix walked along it without looking into any of the other rooms until he reached the end door, where he found that, by standing behind the spectators, he could comfortably overlook all that was going on within. The bridegroom seemed to be a young for-ester, and his bride a burgher's daughter from the city. Consequently, the whole affair had a certain something about it which distinguished it favorably from ordinary country weddings, and the couples spun around through the spacious hall in quite an orderly fashion, and without the customary shouting, screaming, and romping, to the music of several stringed instruments, a solitary clarionet, and the occasional sound of a woodman's horn.

The first couple that Felix made out through the blue mist of tobacco-smoke was Rosenbusch with his Nanny. And, to his surprise, he saw Elfinger and his sweetheart waltzing gracefully close behind them; and the future bride of heaven seemed to abandon herself without much resistance to this worldly pleasure.

And now even the young countess herself appeared amid this mixed company, whirled by the young baron, her betrothed, far more rapidly than would have been good *ton* at a court ball. Her brother, the count, stood in a retired corner, apparently paying his court to Aunt Babette, who would not let herself be seduced into dancing again for any price in the world. In the adjoining room, which he could only half overlook, he perceived his friend Kohle, absorbed in an earnest conversation with the countess.

No trace of Irene anywhere! Could she have hidden from him? It was hardly possible that she could be in the other rooms, where the more elderly relatives of the bridal couple sat, eating and talking. And yet he must know whither she had gone, in order to spare her another painful meeting.

A waiting-maid entering through one of the open doors just at this moment, he determined to ask her about the Fräulein. But when he called to the tidy-looking girl, and she turned her head toward him, a half-joyful, half-embarrassed cry of surprise escaped them both. A little more and the girl would have let the mugs fall from her hands. Trembling and blushing she put down her load on a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

"What a queer place to meet *you* in, Zenz!" said Felix, going up to her kindly and holding out his hand. "How long have you been here? But you don't know

me any longer !—or won't you give me your hand because you are angry with me ?”

The girl stood motionless, leaning against the wall and deeply flushed, her hands outstretched, with the fingers wide-spread as if in supplication. She was dressed much more daintily than the waiter-girls down-stairs ; her thick red hair, hanging in two heavy braids down her back, was wound around with a little string of corals, and her arms were bare to the elbow. Her charming figure showed to advantage in its short dress and tight-fitting bodice, and a little rose in her bosom set off the whiteness of her neckerchief and of her little coquettish waitress's apron. It was no wonder she found suitors enough out here in the country, and could play the prude toward the young boatman.

“ Well, Zenz,” Felix began again, for she still remained silent, “ is it all over with our old friendship ? You ran away from me once so treacherously, you naughty child—I searched every corner for you—but I bear you no malice on that score. Look here, perhaps you can tell me what has become of the young Fräulein ?—the tall one with the water-proof ? She is not with the others.”

“ I know the one you mean well enough,” the girl answered, suddenly growing quite unembarrassed, for he behaved so coolly and seemed to have forgotten all the past. “ You mean the handsome one who has something distinguished about her, more than all the rest. She couldn't stand it long in the hot rooms, but had a chamber given her up-stairs, so as to be all alone, for she had such a terrible headache, she said. Do you know her ? But of course you do ; you came with the party. Why, I shouldn't wonder if she were your—”

She broke off and peered in his face, with a sly look. Something of her old frivolity flickered up in it; but then she scornfully curled her lips.

"For all I care!" she said, shrugging her shoulders. "What difference does it make to me who your sweetheart is? Go up the stairs there and knock at No. 17. You will find what you are looking for."

"Zenz," he answered, with a troubled look, "you are very much mistaken if you think— But tell me, first of all, how you have been, and whether you like the life out here better than in the city, and whether I can help you in any way?"

He felt the necessity of showing his friendliness in some way or other to this good creature, whose devotion he had so coldly repulsed, that he might efface the painful remembrance from her mind. She seemed to feel this, and to be grateful for it. A soft blush—no longer of embarrassment, but of joy—mounted to her cheeks.

"How do I like it here?" she said, laughing. "Oh, pretty well so far. The people of the house treat me very well, and if I do my duty, what do I care for any one else? Only it's just a little dull and lonely here."

"I imagine there is no lack of people, Zenz, who would be glad to help you while away the time if you would only let them."

She did not answer at once, but listened in the direction of the stairs, where some one had just crept up and had stopped half-way as if to listen. There was a pause in the music, and any one standing on the dark stairway could not have helped hearing every word that was spoken on the landing above. The girl's face assumed a slighting, contemptuous expression. She seemed to know who was standing there on the watch, and purposely

raised her voice so as to give the listener the full benefit of what she said.

"Have you, too, heard that gossip?" she said. "Well, if any one ever says to you again that Zenz has got a lover here, give him my best regards and tell him he is a mean liar. I know very well that the waiter-girl in Leoni says all sorts of bad things about me because Hiesl, the fisherman, who used to keep company with her, tries to pay court to me. But, though I am only a poor girl, I am a hundred times too good for such a wild fellow as he is, going about on every holiday picking quarrels, and spending all his money on drinking and bowling. Just think of it, that little Spanish knife I took from your table that time by mistake—or rather not by mistake—I really believe, may God forgive me, I would have liked best to kill myself, I felt so wild and unhappy that night!—well, I have carried it about with me ever since; I used to wear it stuck in my bodice instead of the spoon which, as a waiter-girl, I ought to have carried, and it's not a week ago that I told Hiesl my opinion of him once for all, and he grew so furious that he snatched the knife away from me, and cried out 'to remember him if anything happened,' or something of that kind. But I laughed, and said unless he gave it back to me something *would* happen, for I would complain of him to the police. *He* my lover! Well, I *should* be a fool! Besides, I don't want any lover at all; it always ends in the girl's being deceived; and the one she can get she doesn't like, and the one she likes she can't get. And now let me go, Herr Baron, the ladies and gentlemen inside are waiting, and you must go and pay your court to the Fräulein. Why should you waste your time out here with a waitress?"

She made a movement as if to take up her mugs again, but without hurrying herself particularly.

Just at this moment the music struck up again, playing a cheerful but not very lively waltz, apparently with the purpose of inviting the more elderly guests to join the dance.

"Zenz," said Felix, looking her straight in the face, "I don't care anything about the Fräuleins inside there ; and, besides, I don't feel in a mood for love-making. As soon as the storm is over, I am going off without taking leave. If any one asks after me, you need only say that I wanted to be in Starnberg in time to catch the last train. But first I want to know whether I can't do you a favor of any kind, or get something for you in the city, or whether you have any wish that a good friend could fulfill for you? Speak out, Zenz! I am so unhappy myself that I would like, at least, to give a little bit of happiness to some one else."

She looked searchingly in his face, as if to see whether he was in earnest. She could not understand why he should not be happy.

"Do you know," said she, at last, "if what you said was not meant as a joke, I have a wish, and there is nothing so very terrible about it either—I would like to dance with you, just once."

"To dance with me?"

"Of course I know well enough what is proper, and that a waiter-girl shouldn't mix among the wedding-guests unless it happens to be a peasant's wedding. But to be always hearing this beautiful music, that makes you tingle down to the tips of your toes, and yet never to be allowed to swing round with the rest, is very hard. I only mean that it is almost the same out here in the entry as in the

hall—you can hear every note and the floor is smooth and clean. Will you?"

He still hesitated. He certainly felt in no mood for dancing. But when she suddenly put out her hand with a quick movement to seize her mugs, as if she interpreted his hesitation to mean that, after all, he felt himself too good to be her partner, he could not find it in his heart to let her go away from him a second time feeling mortified and insulted.

"You are right, child," he said. "Let us dance. A man needn't be particularly merry to have dancing feet. Come! But you must show me how they do it here in the country."

He put his arm round her slight and yielding figure, and she clung to it with evident pleasure. "It goes splendidly," she whispered, after the first round. "I feel as if I were being lifted up into heaven. Do you remember how you put me on your horse, that time? Good Heavens! how long ago that seems, and yet it's only a few weeks!"

He did not answer, but went on dancing, rather gravely and seriously; for it was no easy task to move easily up and down through the long, narrow entry. And all the while he felt that his partner clung to him more and more tenderly, while he himself remained perfectly cool; and it was only when it seemed to him that they had had enough, and he had released the girl from his arms again, in front of the chair on which her beer-mugs stood, that he stroked her round face caressingly and said: "Was that right, little one?"

She trembled slightly, glancing over his shoulder in the direction of the stairs which led to the upper story. Suddenly she pushed him from her, whispered "Thank

you," and, quickly seizing her mugs, ran past him and down the stairs.

He looked after her in surprise. What was it that had transformed this girl so suddenly? A sudden suspicion arose within him. He rushed toward the stairs, and peered up into the darkness. There was no longer anything to be seen. But he heard a light footstep up above creeping softly across the entry, and immediately afterward the latch of a door was heard to fall, and a key was turned in the lock.

A cold shiver passed over him, as the thought suddenly flashed across him that this must have been *she*. She had started to go and join the company, and had turned back when half-way down the stairs, in order not to disturb his dance with a waiting-maid—!

The discovery was so crushing that he remained standing motionless in the middle of the corridor, and heard and saw nothing of what was going on around him. He was finally roused from his stupor by one of the wedding-guests, who, in stumbling past, struck against him with no little force. He slowly felt his way down-stairs, passed across the lower hall, and stepped out into the open air in a truly pitiable state of mind.

The storm had passed, but the air still trembled from the shock, and now and then a drop fell from the roof, or the distant reflection of the fading lightning flashed across the clear sky. The mountains stood out on the horizon like light, sharply-defined clouds, and the reflection of the stars danced up and down upon the waves, which seemed to keep up the turmoil longer than anything else, and still surged darkly on the shore.

Felix went down to the bank, and walked to the extreme end of the landing-pier. In the commotion of his

thoughts, he found it impossible to decide as to the course he should pursue. Should he at once seek an interview with her, and explain how it had all come about—this inconceivable, unheard-of, unpardonable scene? That after such a painful meeting he had not scorned to flirt with a waiter-girl; that he intended anything rather than to play a defiant and indifferent *rôle*; that only a series of most unfortunate circumstances—but how could he explain to her what it was that had induced him to behave so tenderly toward the poor creature? And would she listen to him at all, for that matter? After all, it seemed as if it would be better for him to write. But even that would only help him out of the last phase of this serio-comic dilemma. What was to guard him from a repetition of similar scenes, if he continued to remain anywhere near her?

He stood for a long time leaning over the railing of the bridge, staring down into the restless, surging waves, lost in wild thoughts, while through the open window the clarionet squeaked and the bass-viol growled, as though there were none but happy people in all the world.

At last, making a violent effort, he roused himself. He was determined to avoid meeting a human face at any price, and to make his way to Starnberg on foot.

But, as he turned round, he saw behind him, planted in the middle of the narrow way, a dark figure, which he immediately recognized as that of Hiesl, the boatman. In his face, which he could plainly distinguish in spite of the darkness, he could read the bitterest enmity. Besides, the fellow had spread his legs, and thrust out his elbows, as if to obstruct the way, and now stood grinning impudently in his face.

"Fine weather, Herr Graf," he cried, hoarsely and

thickly. "Quite fine again for taking a walk, alone or with a single companion. I suppose you won't be left alone long—ha, ha, ha! She'll probably get away from the wedding soon, so as to dance a little while with the Herr Graf, all alone by yourselves—ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out of the way, fellow!" cried Felix, stepping close up to him. "If you are seeking a quarrel, you will find you have hit on the wrong man."

"The wrong man?" blurted out the peasant, who coolly remained standing where he was, and merely folded his arms across his breast. "That would be a joke; if I couldn't see who the right man is, two feet off. You are a count, and I am only a stupid country lout—isn't that the way? And Zenz dances with you, and hangs on your neck, and turns her back on me. So now, you see, I know all about it; I'm sober, too, and understand my business as well as the next man. If the Herr Count would perhaps like to row out upon the lake with the girl, Hiesel would consider it an honor to provide a boat for his high-mightiness's pleasure; and if the stupid country lout has to hold the light for the Herr Count—"

"Out of my way, you fool!" cried Felix, now angry in his turn at the jealous fellow's crazy attack. "If you touch me with a finger, I'll break every bone in your body. I don't understand a word of what you have been raving about. The waiter-girl isn't my sweetheart, and if it will give you any satisfaction, you can wait and see whether she will steal out here to meet me. If you had your five senses about you, and hadn't left your eyes behind in your beer-mug, you would see that I am not your Herr Count. So get on! I'm in no humor to stand any more nonsense!"

The peasant made no answer, nor did he laugh any

more ; but stared straight in Felix's face, and stood like a post. And now when Felix stepped forward to pass by, he suddenly felt himself seized around the waist and violently pushed back. The blood rushed madly to his forehead. "You blackguard !" he cried, "if you will have it, you shall."

He struck his adversary in the chest with such force that for a moment the sturdy fellow's arms relaxed their hold. But the next instant he felt himself grasped again and forced back to the edge of the wharf, where the posts projected out of the water as high as a man's head, and the water itself was deep enough to give plenty of room for the steamer's keel.

"You or I," gasped the furious peasant. "You or I ! If she won't have me, she sha'n't have you either, you damned city puppy !" He struggled with renewed fury to push his enemy over the railing. But Felix was on his guard. By a quick push he gained the shore side again, and forced his opponent back almost to the last plank. For a moment the battle paused. The next instant Felix felt a violent stab ; a sharp-pointed instrument had been thrust into him under the armpit between his breast and shoulder, so that his left arm dropped paralyzed by his side.

He felt at once that he was seriously wounded, and a terrible fury seized upon him. "Murderer !" he cried ; "you cowardly ruffian, you shall pay for this !"

Exerting all his strength, he threw the fellow to the ground, seized his throat so firmly with his right hand that he could do nothing but gasp, and would have strangled him had not the man, who had suddenly become sober, and who was lying on the very edge of the wharf, been crafty enough to draw the supple Spanish blade, with all his

force, across the hand that was choking him. The moment the bloody hand released his throat, he slid over the edge of the wharf and immediately vanished in the lake below.

The dull, splashing noise of the fall suddenly brought the victor to his senses. But he felt absolutely indifferent about the fellow's rising again and gaining the shore. He had no other feeling than one of disgust at this wild struggle in such a wretched cause. And now, when he found himself alone on the high wharf, a cold shudder passed over him, as if he had just shaken off a mad dog and hurled him into the water. He peered down into the lake and then tried to laugh; but shuddered anew at his own voice, that sounded so strange to him. Then, too, the squeaking, idiotic clarionet and the comfortably grunting bass-viol kept sounding in his ears;—what a world, in which all this could be huddled so close together! Then, leaning on the railing, over which the blood from his hand was trickling, he raised himself up, and was conscious now, for the first time, of a piercing pain in his shoulder. But his legs still bore him. Away, only away! was all he thought. The resolution he had previously formed, before the murderous fellow came in his way, rose clearly before his mind again, to hasten to Starnberg, from there back to the city, from the city to the ends of the earth. Only away! without looking back—no matter what was left behind him!

He took a few steps away from the wharf, in the direction of the road. But he had not gone far when he lost consciousness, his knees gave way beneath him, and he fell senseless on the rain-soaked earth.

A moment after the house-door was opened, and Schnetz stepped out into the open air, followed by Kohle;

bearing a large umbrella. The old countess had begged them to go out and see whether the return trip might now be taken without danger. They themselves were anxious to escape as soon as possible from the stifling, sultry tumult of the wedding festival ; while the others, who had caught the dancing fever, did not appear to notice how the hours had slipped away.

Schnetzer cast but a single glance at the heavens, and then said, with the confidence of an old soldier who has reconnoitred a hostile region : "It's all right. We may give the signal for breaking camp. But first we must take a look at the boats. What's become of the baron ? Did you notice, Kohle, that during the whole trip he has been in a mood like that of a cat in a thunder-storm, for all he pretended to be so quiet ? *Nom d'un nom !* I wish—"

The word died on his lips. For just at that moment he caught sight of him of whom he spoke, lying lifeless on the damp ground. He bent over him in horror, and called him by his name. When no sound came in answer, and only the pool of blood in which he lay gave sign of what had happened, he quickly recovered his presence of mind and coolly weighed the situation.

"There's no medical assistance to be had in this hole," he said ; "we must row him over to Fat Rossel's villa, and send at once for the Starnberg doctor, who fortunately is said to be a skillful man. What are you sniveling in that wretched fashion for, Kohle ? He isn't going to die on the spot. In Africa I've seen a man pull through far worse cases than this. Pluck up your spirits, man, and before all things don't make a noise. Not a soul must know of this until we are safely in our boat. We must take Rossel's boat for us three alone, so that he can lie at

full length ; how the others will get home is their own lookout. The young gentlemen will undoubtedly know how to help themselves out of the scrape."

He tore a leaf from his note-book, and wrote a few words upon it. "So, give that to Red Zenz, the waiter-girl. She appears to me to be a plucky sort of person who doesn't lose her head easily. She is not to give the note to the young baroness, who is the only person here to whom I owe an explanation, until we have embarked. Make haste, Kohle, make haste. Meantime I'll be making a bed in the boat."

In five minutes Philip Emanuel came running back again, with Zenz following close at his heels. She did not speak a word, for Kohle had enjoined the strictest silence upon her, but her face was as white as chalk ; and when she saw the wounded man she fell on her knees beside him and groaned aloud.

"Be quiet," commanded the lieutenant ; "this is no time for whimpering. Have you got a piece of linen, girl ? We must make a bandage."

Still remaining on her knees, she tore off her white apron and the kerchief round her neck. It was only when Schnetz had hastily bound up the shoulder and the wound in the hand, and, with Kohle's aid, had carefully borne the unconscious form into the boat, that she raised herself from the ground and followed the men to the shore.

"I am going with you," she said softly, but very decidedly. "I must go with you. I gave the note to the other waiter-girl ; she will see that it is delivered. For Christ's sake, let me go with you ! Who else is there to take care of him ?"

"Nonsense !" growled Schnetz ; "he won't need any care on the way over, and on the other side there is help

enough. What are you thinking of, girl? You can't run away from service in this free-and-easy way."

"Who is to hinder me?" she said, laughing defiantly in the midst of all her anxiety and wretchedness. "I belong to no one. I tell you I will go with you, if it were only to hold his head on my lap on the way, so that he would lie softer. If you won't take me with you—there's an old dug-out over there—I'll row after you as true as my name is Zenz. I must hear what the doctor says, and whether he will live."

"Then come along, in the devil's name, you witch; but no shrieking and bawling. Get into the boat, Kohle; so, lift him carefully now—and you, girl, take a seat in the middle. It's true, it won't do any harm if he has something softer under his head than this bundle of sticks."

A few minutes more and the slender boat pushed off from the shore. Schnetz rowed and Kohle sat at the tiller again; but, instead of the merry company that had occupied these same seats but a few hours before, amusing themselves with singing and flute-playing, there now lay on the bottom of the boat a white, silent passenger, with closed eyes; and at his head crouched a pale girl, who, from time to time, silently dried with her long red locks the heavy drops of blood which oozed out from under the bandages. Her head was sunk upon her breast. The others must not see how the big tear-drops coursed steadily down her cheeks.

CHAPTER VIII.

UP-STAIRS, in a bare, meanly-furnished room of the tavern, lay Irene.

The dim beams of the setting sun shone in through the little window-panes, which were still dripping from the rain, but did not penetrate to the sofa where the poor girl cowered in an agony of grief, covering her face with her hands and vainly trying to close her ears so tightly with the folds of her hood that she should not hear the music of the waltz below. The walls and floors of the lightly-built upper story groaned under the regular step of the dance. Never in all her life, she thought, had she been more wretched and miserable, not even in those gloomy days before she resolved to write Felix a letter of farewell. Then there was still a certain greatness, dignity, and harmony left both within and about her; now her condition was painful and revolting to a degree that seemed almost pitiably ridiculous.

She, lying up here in torture; and he down below in the best of spirits, whirling about with a waiter-girl in his arms, to the music of a peasant's orchestra—not among the other wedding-guests even, but apart, secretly, in the way one only dances when one is very much in the mood for it, or very much in love! She did not even have the consolation of thinking he had done this merely out of defiance to her, out of secret lovesickness and grief. He could not possibly have had a suspicion that she would come down and surprise him at his dance; that she would see how tightly the girl clung to him, and how reluctantly she finally released herself from his arms.

She had flown up-stairs as if pursued by a ghost, had pushed the bolt to behind her with trembling hands, and had thrown herself on the hard little sofa, and shut her eyes and bowed her head as if now the death blow might fall at any moment. And down below-the jovial bass-viol hummed and buzzed, and the clarionet abandoned itself to the most extravagant passages.

For the moment she hated this man, whom heretofore, through all their separation, she had mourned over as one does over a dead friend, who, though lost, is still dear forever. When she thought that the hand which had once caressed her had stroked the chin of this coarse red-haired girl, a pang of bitter aversion shot through her heart, as if she felt herself humiliated and dishonored by the mere association. She shed no tears, but only because her pride rose up in all its strength against such a proceeding. And yet she had to bite into the silk lining of her hood with her little teeth in order to suppress her sobbing and restrain her weeping.

She felt that she must take some step to put an end to this unbearable state of things ; that she must start the very next morning on the Italian journey which had been so unfortunately postponed. But to-day, now, when before all else she must avoid meeting him again, she must escape from this mad-house where she stood in positive danger of going crazy herself.

Just then a knock was heard at the door. She sprang to her feet in alarm. If it should be he ? if he had come, perhaps, to justify himself to her ; to excuse his outrageous behavior ?

She was incapable of uttering a sound ; and, even after the knock had been repeated a second time, she was unable to ask who was there. It was only when she heard

the voice of the waiter-girl, who called through the door that she had a message to deliver to the Fräulein, that she found strength to drag herself with trembling knees to the door, and open it. She took a note from the girl's hand, shook her head quickly in reply to the question whether she wanted a light, and bolted the door in the face of the hastily-dismissed messenger, who would have been glad of a chance to talk a little.

There was light enough at the window for her to decipher the martial handwriting of the lieutenant.

"My friend has suddenly been taken very ill. I must transport him to Rossel's villa without delay. Please to excuse my desertion to the other ladies. Commending myself to the indulgence of my noble young mistress, I remain, in the most devoted haste,

"SCHNETZ."

"My friend"—she knew that no other could be meant than Felix; and yet this news, which, at any other time, would have given her a deadly shock, came to her now like a release from the bitterest torture. Would she not bear anything rather than know that he was happy after the wrong he had done her? Might not the outrageous scene she had just witnessed be explained as coming from a freak of fever—from a last flaring-up of his spirits before the final breaking-down? Then, in spite of all, he was still worthy of her secret thoughts—ay, she even owed him some apology, and could grieve for him, and show him that sympathy which we owe to all who are in suffering.

A heavy weight fell from her heart. She read the note a second time. "Rossel's villa?"—that lay only

half an hour's walk from theirs. She might get news before the evening was over. Schnetz would very likely come himself and tell her.

But, while she was absorbed in such thoughts, she let her eyes sweep across the lake, and saw the boat, rowed by Schnetz and Kohle, just pushing off from the shore. The twilight was still bright enough to enable her to distinctly recognize the girl in the waitress's dress, who sat on the low seat and held the youth's head in her lap. If there had still been any doubt in the watcher's mind, it would have been put at rest by the sight of the red braids, with which the little Samaritan appeared to be caressing the insensible man.

With quick strokes of the oars the boat shot out on the broad surface of the lake. A few minutes, and the figures in it had faded into shadows. Soon, only a faint line on the lake's polished mirror indicated the course the silent craft had taken.

A quarter of an hour after, Irene entered the room next to the dancing-hall, where the old countess was impatiently awaiting the return of her cavalier, who had only left her to make preparations for the homeward voyage. She was frightened by the Fräulein's colorless face, and overwhelmed her with anxious inquiries. Irene handed her the lieutenant's note, in lieu of any other answer. The lively excitement into which this very unfortunate incident threw the good lady diverted her thoughts completely from Irene's condition. The young people, too, who were hastily called away from their dancing, were far too much occupied with one another, and with the question what was to be done, to find anything odd in Irene's mute and stony manner. Besides, she had already complained of a headache. The countess scolded at

Schnetz for having taken no thought of her. To whom could they intrust the guidance of the vessel now? She flatly refused Elfinger's and Rosenbusch's willingly-offered aid, nor would she listen to such a thing as their looking about for a boatman in the house, but declared that now no price would induce her to trust herself upon the water again. Instances had been known where the wind had suddenly sprung up and driven back a thunder-storm that had once passed over!

In the mean while, the young count had been in consultation with the landlord, and now came to report that a carriage could be ready immediately, which would easily carry them to Starnberg inside of an hour. The other party might then make use of their boat, unless they should prefer to wait until the vehicle came back. But as the sky was clear, and the night warm and lovely, both the sisters and Aunt Babette thought it would be more advisable to make the voyage across than to wait several hours more in the close house.

So they took leave of the wedding-guests with more or less ceremony, and made preparations for starting. The old countess, who, for several hours past, had shown herself extremely gracious as long as Schnetz was present to act as go-between, and the unknown young baron had lent a certain respectability to his burgher friends, now suddenly seemed to become conscious again of the gulf between her and the savers of her life—particularly in the case of the girls, whom she did not honor with another word. She gave Rosenbusch to understand, in pretty plain language, that she was very angry with Schnetz, who had quite forgotten all "*égards*" toward her, and had gone off without even coming to take leave in person. The battle-painter, who found himself placed in a rather

embarrassing situation, was just on the point of making some excuse for his absent friend, when suddenly the words stuck in his throat. They had left the house in order to wait outside until the carriage should be ready. There, on the white gravel close to the bank, Rosenbusch saw a dark spot, from which a broad trail of drops ran down as far as the landing-place. "Good God!" he cried. "What is this? Blood? Freshly-shed blood? Countess, if this blood should really have come from our baron, our friend Schnetz would undoubtedly be justified, even by the severest court of honor, for having failed in the laws of courtesy. I beseech you, don't let the others learn anything of this—young ladies are so devilish timid and frightened at the sight of blood—"

Unfortunately the warning came too late. Irene had just stepped up to the place where they were standing. When she caught sight of the ghastly trace, she uttered a low cry, staggered back, and leaned for a moment upon Rosenbusch, who officiously sprang to her assistance. This scene caused the others to hasten up; and after the first shock was over, they exhausted themselves in speculations upon this mysterious occurrence. Who could possibly believe in hemorrhage in a young man of such conspicuous strength and powerful figure? And as for a fight—where were they to look for an adversary?

The friends were still standing around the ghastly spot, shocked and not knowing what to do, when one of the hostlers, belonging to the hotel, came running up and told them he had also discovered traces of blood on the landing-bridge, and this knife lying near them, on the bank. It was not an ordinary peasant's knife with the blade fastened firmly in the handle, but a slim dagger of Damascus steel, and the handle bore a distinct impression

of a bloody hand ; no one except Irene knew to whom it had belonged.

In the mean while the carriage had driven up, and they lifted Irene in. Though still suffering terribly, she struggled hard to maintain her composure. The mother and daughter and the two young men crowded into the other places as well as they could. Another short leave-taking, whose brevity was perfectly explained by the gloomy mood they were all in, and the aristocratic part of the company rolled away.

A few minutes later the boat pushed off from the shore, rowed by Rosenbusch and Elfinger. The night was still and clear, and the cool wind blew, soft and damp, upon the girls' hot cheeks. But they sat nestled close to one another, and gazed in silence at the sparkling water ; nor did either of the friends utter a word. Aunt Babette alone made a slight attempt at conversation, by saying how amiable these aristocratic persons were upon nearer acquaintance, and what a pity it was they could not have returned home together ; for she had been telling the young count so much about Rosenbusch's flute-playing.

As no one made any answer to all this, she, too, grew silent, folded her hands in her lap, and appeared sunk in pious meditation.

CHAPTER IX.

It was close upon midnight when Irene's uncle returned, in his open wagon, from a trip to the Ammersee. The old lion-hunter was in glorious spirits ; he had made several bull's-eyes at the shooting-match ; had made love

to the ladies ; and had found a willing ear for his most fabulous African hunting-tales even among the men. Even his famous story of how he had aimed a double-barreled English rifle at a lioness, and had fired two shots so rapidly one after the other, that the ball from the right barrel shot out the animal's right eye, and that from the other the left—even this narrative, about whose truthfulness some doubts had occasionally been expressed, was apparently swallowed in all faith. The champagne had done all the rest ; so that the happy man started out of the sweetest dreams when his carriage drew up before the wicket-gate of the Starnberg villa.

He was surprised to see that the balcony-room was still lighted up. It was not in the least like Irene to allow an affectionate anxiety for her night-owl of an uncle to keep her awake, and all signs of light were extinguished in the neighboring houses. Then it occurred to him that perhaps Schnetz had decided to stay out overnight, and to sit up until his return. He was glad of this, for it would afford him an opportunity to give an account of his triumphs to a connoisseur in such matters ; and he was therefore disagreeably disappointed when, upon his entering the little *salon* up-stairs where the light was burning, his young niece alone advanced to meet him.

Her face looked so strangely agitated, her manner was so excited, that his champagne spirits departed on the instant, and he asked, in great alarm, what had happened, and what had become of friend Schnetz ? and why Irene, who was evidently unwell, had not gone to bed ?

Speaking rapidly and with difficulty, she gave him an account of what had passed. Not until she had finished the story did the name of him who had played the chief rôle in this bloody catastrophe pass her lips.

But the effect produced by her account was very different from what she had expected.

Instead of expressing horror and sympathy the lively gentleman ran around the room uttering a cry of joy, rubbing his hands and behaving himself generally in such a delighted way, that Irene regarded him with amazement, and finally asked him whether he had been listening to her, or whether his thoughts were still with the merry hunting-party he had just quitted.

"No, no ! my dearest child," he cried, suddenly halting before her. "You suspect me wrongly. Unfortunately I am accustomed to being misunderstood by you, and to being accused of a frivolity which sometimes overtakes me even in those moments when my proud little niece assumes her most tragic tone. But, believe me, Irene dear, I see no reason in this whole catastrophe that you have told me of to change my way of thinking. That our Felix has lost a few drops of blood will not do the scapegrace any particular harm, perhaps, and will take the wildness out of him a little. At the worst, there will be no immediate bad consequence—for that I can trust my good old Schnetz ; and Providence will not be so foolish as to send such a fine young fellow over the bourn by such a miserable knife-scratch as this. And if we escape with a simple fright, the whole situation will be left in the best condition imaginable to repair some foolish errors that we have made. Come, my child ! Look me in the face, and confess that in secret you are of my opinion."

She looked him directly in the eyes, but with a sad expression.

"We misunderstand one another again, uncle."

"Say, rather, you don't think it becoming to wish to

understand my honest and candid opinion. But, since you are ten times brighter and more diplomatic than an old hunter and soldier like myself—”

“I entreat you, uncle—”

“You can’t fail to understand, without any further explanations on my part, that it amuses me enormously to see our youngster Felix, whom I imagined to be wandering about God knows where, a sighing and rejected suitor, suddenly turn up next door to us. Do you mean to tell me that chance has arranged all this so skillfully? Pooh, pooh!—you can’t cheat me. I tell you he has been traveling after us, and has secretly followed his old flame, whom he still worships, into the primeval forests of Starnberg and across the tempestuous lake of Würm; and, since there was no other way of making up to you again with any self-respect, he has adopted the very wisest course, and one that never fails in its effect upon you soft-hearted souls, namely, that of creeping into your sympathy by means of a few ounces of spilt blood, of which article, by-the-way, he still possesses a very fair abundance. And now—”

“Unless you want me to leave the room, uncle, spare me these perfectly groundless insinuations. Have I not told you that he had no suspicion of our plan to make a stay in Munich, and that Schnetz told me how he entered a studio with his old friend Jansen, with the intention of becoming a sculptor? But even if it were all just as you have arranged it in your own mind—what difference would it make in my resolution? Hasn’t this unfortunate meeting proved the truth of all that I said to myself when I gave him back his promise?—has it not confirmed my belief that we could never be happy together? And yet, you imagine I would think differently of him because he

now lies dangerously ill, and perhaps dying, of wounds which were undoubtedly given him by his rival, that peasant fellow—in a fight—about a tavern-waiter—”

Her voice failed her; she turned away to repress her tears; but her passionate pain overcame her, and, bursting into uncontrollable sobbing, she sank back on a chair near the open door leading on to the balcony.

Even the jovial mood of her good-hearted foster-father was not proof against this passionate outburst of long-suppressed feeling. He had always regarded the girl's self-possessed bearing with amazement, and had secretly attributed to her a certain coldness of heart, for she had never given him an insight into the struggles and storms of her young life. And now she sat before him like a child that has given way to its grief, deaf, apparently, to all comforting words and caresses.

“You will bring things to such a pass,” he cried, in ludicrous desperation, “that I shall be forced to take up my old trade, and go out lion-hunting again in my old age. Upon my word it's less wearing work than having anything to do with a pair of estranged lovers, who will neither come together nor yet separate entirely. The thing worked passably as long as you were able to face it out. After all, although I always looked upon it as a piece of foolishness for you to give such a lover his dismissal, just because he didn't want to kiss the slipper before his marriage: still, I supposed you must know what you were about, and it was impossible for me to supply a mother's place toward you, and explain how we men ought to be managed. At all events, things ran smoothly, and we went on living peacefully together. But now, when the ice suddenly breaks and you lose all control over yourself—tell me, what in the world am I to

do? My experience with wild animals has made me something of a savage; but I instantly become the most cowardly and chicken-hearted of domestic animals if a woman—and particularly one I care so much for—begins to cry in my presence.”

She suddenly drew herself up, shook back her curls and passed her hand across her eyes.

“You shall not have to complain of it again, uncle,” she said, in a determined tone; “most assuredly, never again. You are right; it is foolish to cry about something that was all over long ago. You will never, never see me do it again.”

“My brave girl!” he said, embracing her and kissing her wet cheek, a liberty he very seldom ventured to take. “I am glad you still care a little for your old uncle. But now, go to bed, for it has grown so late—”

“To bed!—in this terrible state of anxiety? What are you thinking of, uncle? Will it be possible for you to sleep?”

“Why not, you little goose? Ay, the sleep of the righteous, for I have done my duty to-day, and have shown how our race can shoot—”

“And you can sleep before you know how he is?—and what the doctor has said? I should have sent over to inquire before this, but the people of the house are all asleep, and my maid Louisa is a stranger here and would not be able to find the place.”

“And you think I myself—well, I must confess!—at one o’clock at night, tired to death by all my laurels—”

“Uncle, unless you want to see me die of anxiety—”

She threw herself into his arms, and clung to him in such helpless entreaty that he could not resist. Sighing, and bitterly cursing in his heart the feminine caprice

which could first cast off a fine young fellow and then make her life hang on his, he left the house once more.

She called down to him from the balcony, gave him the directions for finding the nearest way to the physician's house, and then stood there motionless, in the cool night air, waiting for his return.

He came back in a quarter of an hour, but brought no comforting intelligence. The physician had not yet returned from Rossel's villa, and would, in all probability, spend the night there. He had made the physician's wife, whom he had routed up out of her sleep, promise faithfully to send news the first thing in the morning.

So there was no help for it, the night had to be passed in the most agonizing state of uncertainty.

But before the sun had long been shining across the lake, the physician came in proper person; led, not only by the message that had been left for him the night before, but also by a note that Schnetz had commissioned him to deliver to his old comrade and brother-in-arms. In this missive, in his own odd style, he supplemented the physician's bulletin by all sorts of details. The wound in the hand, he said, in conclusion, was, it was to be hoped, of no great account; a sinew had been grazed, but not cut through, so that the determination of this noble youth to augment the number of breadless stone-hewers would, in all probability, not be defeated by the brutal intervention of a Bavarian fist. The physician, on the other hand, reported that the wound in the left shoulder was not altogether without danger, as the stab had reached the extremity of one of the lungs, and a long rest and course of nursing would be necessary before the arm could be used again. For the rest, the patient would receive the best of care in Herr Rossel's villa; his blood and circula-

tion were in a thoroughly healthy condition, and serious danger was quite out of the question.

The doctor, who had never before seen the baron and the beautiful, silent Fräulein, and who found nothing strange in her sympathy, as she had formed one of the party on the day before, soon took his leave, with a promise to keep them regularly informed about the case. Scarcely had he gone, when Irene declared she would not go away from the place until all danger was over; but that then she would not breathe the air on this side of the Alps a moment longer—it weighed upon her spirits.

Her uncle had to give her his word of honor that he would consent to this arrangement, and also that he would not let Schnetz observe how deeply they were both interested in the wounded man, but would explain their sympathy as arising from pure philanthropy. And it really was nothing more than that, she said.

Even though every inner bond was severed between them, still, she would never be able to answer for it to her conscience if she should start off before the question whether he might not possibly need her had been definitely set at rest.

CHAPTER X.

WAS it nothing but abstract philanthropy that suffered Irene to find no rest in any place or any occupation all that day, in spite of the comforting assurances of the doctor?—that drove her from the piano to the writing-desk, from the writing-desk out on to the balcony, and from the garden down to the shore? Not a step sounded on the floor, not a carriage rolled past in the street, but

what she trembled. She had herself sufficiently under control, however, not to betray her nervousness by a single word. But her feverish restlessness did not escape her uncle, who, the night before, had gained for the first time a clear insight into a nature usually so proud. He was secretly rejoiced at this, much as he pitied the poor child in her restless grief. For the first time in years he felt that he was the wiser of the two ; that he was being justified by the course things were taking, and that his good advice, which had once been scorned, was now redounding to his credit. But as he really loved her, he behaved with the most labored delicacy and consideration toward the young sufferer ; never touched her hidden wound by a single word, and only grumbled now and then at the faithless Schnetz, who, considering the slight distance that separated them, might certainly have come over and given him a report of the patient by word of mouth.

He knew that this thought was never out of Irene's mind for a moment, and that all her listening and waiting turned upon it. But when the afternoon came, and no new message made its appearance, he threw his rifle over his shoulder, kissed the hand of his pale little niece, and left the house to scour the woods for a while. If Schnetz should show himself in the mean while, they were to hold him prisoner for the evening.

Scarcely did Irene find herself alone, when she fancied she could not breathe the air in the close little rooms any longer. She hastily caught up her sketch-book, put on her hat, and called her maid to accompany her for a walk. She had recently discovered a picturesque spot, with old trees and high ferns, farther back in the woods, which she

wanted to sketch. She trusted that she should be able to find it again.

Once outside in the streets, she took such quick steps that the girl could hardly keep up with her. But Louisa was too well-trained to take the liberty of asking any inquisitive questions. That her mistress was not just as usual; that she kept her head turned away as much as possible, and did not address a single word to her faithful attendant, she could not, indeed, help noticing. But then these high ladies have their moods. At first, the Fräulein seemed to be looking around, right and left, in search of the goal of her artistic efforts. Then, after they had walked along the forest-road for about a quarter of an hour, and one villa after another, lying amid park and garden shrubbery, began to appear on the bank of the lake to the left, the most lovely old tree-trunks and foreground effects could not win a look from her. Several times she stood still before one of the gates, and appeared to be speculating as to who might live in the house beyond. The day before, Schnetz had given her, in his favorite manner, a humorous description of "Fat Rossel's" villa, and had cut a silhouette of its occupant out of a piece of blotting-paper. These were but weak clues. So she went on farther and farther, and her cheeks grew more and more flushed from the rapid exercise, and her companion, who was rather inclined to corpulence, found it harder than ever to keep up with her.

At last she ventured to ask a laborer whom they met, carrying a pick-axe and shovel, where Herr Rossel's villa was. The man pointed to a park-fence made of rough, pine stakes, and was very much amazed when the young lady rewarded this trivial service with a bright half-gulden.

"Louisa," the Fräulein said, standing still for a moment to recover her breath and push back her hair, "you will wait for me outside here. I have to make some inquiries about something in the garden, and will be back directly. The spot where I meant to sketch lies off to the right, in the middle of the wood, and I see now that the afternoon light will not be as favorable as I thought. It doesn't matter. I shall still be able to draw a few lines. In the mean while hold my sketch-book—or no, I will take it with me—you would be sure to get the leaves out of order. Sit down there on that stump. I sha'n't be gone more than five minutes."

The girl obeyed without a word. She had never before heard the name of the gentleman about whom Irene inquired. She tried to make out some connection in the whole mysterious affair. But as she did not succeed, she soon gave up thinking about it, and rejoiced at this comfortable rest in the cool quiet of the woods after her quick walk.

In the mean time her young mistress had hurried over the rest of the way. The park in the rear of Rossel's little house appeared to be quite empty and deserted, nor was any one to be seen at the windows. For a moment she stood hesitating at the little wicket-gate before she could muster up courage to lift the latch. Then she opened the gate quickly and entered the little shady inclosure, through which wound a number of well-swept gravel paths.

But now, as she stepped out from among the pines, and saw before her the flower-garden and the lawn, whose green turf extended to the threshold of the house, she stopped in alarm, and would have given a great deal could she have retired into the shadow again unobserved. For

right in front of her, in the midst of a clump of tall rose-bushes from which she was cutting the finest flowers for a bouquet, stood Zenz, who recognized her at the first glance, and did not appear at all surprised to meet the Fräulein here again, after the events of the day before.

She gave Irene a good-natured and confidential nod, and said, without waiting to be addressed :

"You have come most likely to inquire after the Herr Baron—haven't you, now? Well, I am much obliged for your kind inquiry; and he is getting on just as well as ever as he can, the doctor says. Only he must be kept very quiet and can't receive any visits from strangers. That's the reason we carried him right off last evening into the studio up there in the turret, where he can't hear a sound from the kitchen and the rooms below; so that even when old Katie has one of her tantrums, and storms and raves about, it won't disturb his peace at all. But not a soul can go in to see him except Herr von Schnetz, Herr Kohle, Herr Rossel—and I, of course, because I am his nurse. I have just run down into the garden to cut him a few roses. It's a good thing to have something pretty by a sick person's bed, so that it will please him when he wakes up. Meantime Herr Kohle is sitting by him and looking after the ice bandages."

While she was prattling on in this *naïve* strain, Irene had the greatest difficulty in restraining her secret aversion toward the girl, who innocently went on with her work; appearing quite a reputable person, too, now that she was without her waitress's apron, and had her red braids simply coiled around her head.

"I wish to speak to Lieutenant von Schnetz a moment," replied Irene, in the coldest possible tone, "since, as you say, he is not busy just now in the sick chamber—"

"The lieutenant? He is asleep. See, Fräulein, over there where the curtains are let down. He has been lying there for the last two hours, trying to make up a little bit for what he lost last night. Good Heavens! What a fright we did have! and every one had more than his hands full before we could get a decent bandage made, especially as old Katie couldn't have been waked out of her sleep if the world had been coming to an end. So I staid here, too, so that there might be some one to wait on the gentlemen. There are so many things about which men folks, even the very wisest of them, are as foolish as little children. Isn't it so, Fräulein? And then—I couldn't bear to be anywhere else, until I know that he is sure to get sound and well again. When people have known each other as well as we two—and only to think that such a thing as this could happen, and that a splendid handsome gentleman like him should be almost stabbed to death just because of a poor girl like me, and he quite innocent, too—"

Irene had made a movement as though to leave the place as quickly as possible. These last words made her think better of it.

"Innocent?" she said, carelessly, without looking at Zenz. "Do you know, then, how it all came about?"

"To be sure I do," cried the girl, eagerly; "I was the cause of it all! I wouldn't have anything to say to him, to Hiesl, I mean, and why shouldn't I confess that I like the baron! There can't be a handsomer or better man in the world, and when he smiles upon you, in his kind way, you seem to feel it away down in your heart. And yet he isn't proud at all, nor impudent and bad to a poor girl, like other young gentlemen; it isn't any disgrace for me to like him better than a rough fellow like Hiesl. Oh!

Fräulein, I don't know how you feel about love, or whether you have a sweetheart, but I—before I saw the Herr Baron one man was just the same to me as another, and now it seems as if there were only this one man under God's heaven; and whatever he says and wants, that I must do, as if it were the Lord himself who ordered me. But he—and you may believe this on my honor and as I hope to be saved—he never thinks of such a thing. He knows well enough how I feel toward him, but he never gives me a thought, and though I'm not pretty I can't be so very ugly either. At all events if I wanted to I could twist Herr Rossel round my little finger. But many thanks! I would rather love one who doesn't care a bit about me, than be loved by one that I don't like!"

Meantime she had gone on tying up her bouquet, and now she held it up with a bright laugh which showed all her white teeth. "Isn't it beautiful?" she said. "But you won't even look at it, Fräulein. Don't you like flowers?"

Irene started out of a deep reverie. Her cheeks burned, and she struggled vainly to maintain her reserve toward this girl, whose frank and perfectly unselfish nature she could not help liking, do what she would.

"And you think it perfectly proper?" she managed at last to say. "It never occurred to you that you are doing anything out of the way in openly following into a strange house, where there are other men, some one who does not care anything about you? Though, to be sure, what does it matter to me what you do or don't do?"

The girl let fall the hand that held the flowers, and gazed straight into the eyes of this young preacher of morality, with an expression that betrayed much more surprise than anger.

"Run after him?" she repeated. "No, Fräulein, I should never think of such a thing; that *would* be stupid. For Black Theresa, where I used to live, has often told me that men only like a poor girl so long as they have to run after *her*. And because I didn't feel sure of myself, and knew that if I lived in the same city with him I could not live without seeing him and watching for him at the places where he usually went—so that I should grow hateful to him at last, while now he is at least kind to me—I came out here into the country and hired myself out as a waiter-girl in the inn over yonder. But you see for yourself I was not to get away from him; and now, when he lies at the point of death, all along of a silly thing like me, and needs my help—no, Fräulein, I didn't blame myself at all for having run after him, and I should consider myself a very bad and heartless girl indeed, if I thought anything about myself and what people might say. I would follow him through a forest of wild beasts just to nurse him, and why not into a house full of good friends of his, none of whom would bite me, just because all have seen that I don't do it for love of them, but only for the sake of him who doesn't care the least bit about me. There, now, don't be angry with me for having told you this right out. I must go back into the house and see whether Herr Kohle needs any fresh ice from the cellar. Shall I give him any message from you; tell him that you called, and hoped he would soon get well?"

Irene had turned away. She felt herself so put to shame by the nature of this girl, whom she had thought so far beneath her; her own behavior looked so mean, narrow, and selfish reflected in the mirror of this absolute, humble, joyful self-sacrifice, and the thought that she must relinquish to another the place at his sick-bed so

cut her to the heart that she could not restrain her tears, and did not even think of trying to hide her overflowing eyes from the astonished girl.

"Go back to him and give him a message from me!—and nurse him—and—I will come again—to-morrow, at this time—no one need know about it besides yourself. What is your name?"

"Crescenz. But they only call me Red Zenz."

"Good-by, Crescenz—I did you wrong! You are a good girl—far, far better than many others. Adieu!"

She held out her hand to the bewildered girl, who was at a loss how to reconcile the Fräulein's sudden kindness with her former coldness. Then she turned hastily, and disappeared among the cedar-trees in the park.

Shaking her head, Zenz stood gazing after her.

"She is in love with him, too, that is certain!" she said to herself; and then it occurred to her that Felix had immediately asked her about this Fräulein, yesterday at the inn. In her thoughts she placed the two side by side, and was forced to admit, with a quiet sigh, that they looked as if they were made for one another. She did not trouble herself particularly as to how far matters had gone between them. For that matter she never had any thoughts for anything except what was near at hand; and, as she looked at her bouquet and said to herself that she should be praised for bringing it, her round face broke into a smile again and she tripped gayly into the house.

In the studio up-stairs, by the side of a low couch on which Felix was lying in a feverish sleep, sat Fat Rossel, who seemed to have completely shaken off his indolence, now that he had to do with so serious an affair. He had, it is true, had his American rocking-chair brought up-

stairs, but otherwise he vied with his friends in performing the duties of the sick-room. It is possible, too, that the proximity of the girl, whose sudden appearance under his roof had made him very thoughtful, had been instrumental in working this miracle. Not only the sarcastic Schnetz, but even the innocent and artless Kohle, had been struck, from the very first, by the respectful and almost chivalrous manner with which he, usually so hard to move, bore himself toward the girl, little grateful or susceptible as she showed herself for his homage. She sought to be nothing in the house but an extra servant, and conducted herself quietly and modestly toward old Katie; and it was only when a question arose about the care of the wounded patient that she expressed her opinion unasked. It was soon evident that, with all her narrowness and her extremely limited education, she had a natural preference for everything tasteful, convenient, and pleasant, so that the little household ran like clockwork, and old Katie found no time to grumble at the increase in the number of the family, but could give herself up, just as before, to her quiet vice.

Kohle stood at his easel. In spite of the excitement of an almost sleepless night, his tireless fancy still kept on working, and he was engaged at this moment in transferring the little sketch of the second picture to a sheet of the size of the first completed cartoon.

"You are, and always will be, a confirmed idealist," said Rossel, in a low tone, without raising his eyes from Felix's sleeping figure. "Instead of taking advantage of the opportunity and making some splendid studies from real life here, you quietly work away at your fables and turn your back on this fine specimen of Nature."

"I merely want to sketch in the outlines of the fig-

ures," the artist responded. "It flashed across me, early this morning, to try whether they will do on a large scale as well as in the sketch. I think, after all, I shall have to shift this central group a little more to the left, so as to give the whole more symmetry."

"Any stranger hearing you talk in this way, Kohle, my boy, would suppose you were such an unsympathetic art-machine that even in the midst of murder and violence you could think of nothing but your Venus. But I know that with you it is merely an unconscious way of keeping up your heart, just as Schnetz drank a glass of schnapps and I smoked a chibouque after the first pull was over. Every one has a specific by which he swears, and yours, moreover, is one of the sort that never runs dry. But now, just come here and take a look at this model. After all, these aristocratic families now and then produce some fine specimens, turned out after the true *no-blesse oblige* principle. What a neck and shoulders this youngster has! And just see, Kohle, how the biceps stands out through his tight-fitting shirt-sleeves. A young Achilles, *corpo di Bacco!* Upon my word I should just like, now, in this soft evening light, if I only had colors and canvas—"

"I can help you out with those," interrupted Kohle, also speaking in a carefully suppressed voice. "I provided myself with a palette only yesterday—old Katie wants to have her portrait painted for her grandchild—I think the canvas—"

"Don't bother yourself about it, my good fellow. Perhaps, after all, it is more sensible of me to study him with my eyes. But look, he tosses about so often! And now again, it's fine the way the forehead is rounded out, and then the splendid form of the brows. No wonder he

has good luck with the women ; and that even that witch Zenz, who, as a general thing, is as unapproachable as you please, runs after this fine fellow like Kätchen von Heilbronn. I only wish—”

At this moment the door opened, and she of whom he was speaking stole in on tiptoe with her bouquet. But, light as her step was, it seemed to have awakened the sleeper. He groaned slightly, threw his right arm above his head and then slowly opened his eyes.

“Beautiful flowers !” he murmured. “Good-morning ! How goes it !—how is art getting on ?”

Then, without waiting for an answer, and as if he were recalling to his mind a face that had appeared to him in his dreams, he said :

“I only wish I knew—whether it were really she. Has any one—asked after me ?”

Zenz approached softly and held the bouquet before him, so that his pale face blushed from the reflection of the dark roses, and said, in a whisper :

“I have a message for you from the beautiful Fräulein ; she was down in the garden to inquire after you, and she hopes you will soon be well again. Oh, you know who I mean ! The one over yonder, who didn’t want to dance with the rest.”

His eyes still rested on the bouquet ; the words that he heard overcame him with such happiness and bliss that he believed he was still dreaming. By a powerful effort he raised his head a little, so as to hide his burning face in the flowers.

“Zenz,” he said, “is that—really true ?”

“As true as I live ; and she even began to cry at last, so that I felt sorry for her myself, although—”

A smile passed over the sick man’s lips. He tried to

say, but his emotion had been too violent. A dizziness overcame him, and, with a gentle sigh, which did not sound like a sigh of pain, he closed his eyes and immediately sunk back into a quiet slumber.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

ON a pleasant afternoon, a few days later, Jansen, Julie, and Angelica started from the city for the Starnberg villa.

The drive was silent and sad, for Jansen had been deeply moved by what had happened, and Julie's heart was full of sympathy for his anxiety. To the disappointment of all, when they reached Rossel's house, that worthy met them with a grave face and reported that the doctor had ordered absolute quiet, and had forbidden all exciting visits. He led the ladies into the little *salon* and had some refreshments brought by Zenz, who opened her eyes wide at Julie in unconcealed admiration. But they were none of them in a mood to taste anything. They waited with beating hearts to hear what news Jansen would bring back, for nothing could dissuade him from going up to the sick man's room.

Felix lay as before in a half-sleeping state, so that Schnetz, whose watch it happened to be, thought it would do no harm to admit his friend. But they merely greeted one another with a silent nod. Then the sculptor stepped up to the sick-bed of his Icarus, and, turning his head away from the others, stood there motionless for full ten

minutes. Schnetz, who had seated himself again on the stool before the easel and was cutting out a silhouette, noticed that a trembling, like that of suppressed sobs, shook Jansen's massive frame. He was surprised at this, for he did not know in what intimate relations the two had stood to one another.

"There is no danger," he said, in a low voice; "a few weeks and he will be able to mount his horse again. How he will get on with his modeling is not so certain. That cut over the right hand was very heavy. But I imagine that will be your least sorrow."

The sculptor did not answer.

But the wounded man seemed to have caught a word or two of what Schnetz had whispered. He slowly opened his heavy, feverish eyes, and, with a dreamy smile that gave a sweet, arch look to his pale face, he muttered :

"Sorrow !—why should any one be sorry ? The world is so beautiful—even pain does one good. No, no, we will laugh—laugh—and drink to the health—"

He made a movement, and the piercing pain it caused him roused him thoroughly. He recognized the silent figure at his bedside.

"Hans, my old Dædalus !" he cried, making a motion of his hand toward his friend, "is it you ? Good !—this is capital ! This gives me more pleasure—than I can tell you ! Have you left your Paradise to come out here ? Oh, if you knew—you see I must not talk much—I could not, even if I would—else—Heavens ! what things—I should have to tell you ! And you me, wouldn't you, old boy ? Between ourselves, it wasn't just as it should have been—we knew almost nothing at all about one another—you had your head full, and I too. But now, as soon as I am able to talk again—you know that no human

being is what you are to me—except one—except one—and even she—”

Schnetz rose with considerable noise, stepped up to the bed, and said : “ Fresh ice is of more account just now than warm old friendship. So stop a bit ! ”

He made a sign to Jansen to go out without waiting to take leave, and then busied himself about his nurse’s duties, while Felix’s looks and words soon grew confused again.

It was some time before Jansen returned to the ladies, who had been carrying on a rather monosyllabic conversation with the master of the house. Julie saw at once from her lover’s face how much this meeting with his sick friend had moved him. She offered to remain out here with Angelica, in the house, or at least in the neighborhood, so as to lighten the duties of the men as much as possible. “ Let us stay, my dear Herr Rossel,” she entreated ; “ we shall have no difficulty in finding a room somewhere in the neighborhood. Angelica will make flower studies, and I will rip cloth for bandages, and pick lint. A woman without talents, like myself, is invaluable at such a time.”

Rossel declined all these proposals, nor would he hear of such a thing as Jansen’s staying to assist them. They three sufficed to do anything that men could do. And the female department was also in the best of hands. Then he began to expatiate with much warmth upon the tireless energy and willingness of Red Zenz, who had not returned to the *salon*, saying he thought he owed it to the good child not to hurt her feelings by accepting any other help than hers and that of his old house-keeper. In spite of their wish the friends had to yield ; but they made him promise, at parting, that he would send for them at once in case the

duties became more onerous, or he should find they had not force enough.

In addition to this, Kohle promised to send them news daily.

One other subject came up for discussion during this visit. Even in the first excitement, Schnetz had urged that they should report the affair, and have Hiesl, the murderous boatman, handed over to the courts. The latter had the audacity to go about in Starnberg, and to work at his calling, as if nothing had happened; indeed, he was reported to have boasted of the whole affair, and to have said: "I hope I have spoiled the honorable gentleman's sport for a few weeks, at least." This cold-blooded, triumphant defiance enraged the lieutenant, and he would have liked to give the fellow a good lesson. Rosel, however, opposed this—chiefly in order to spare Zenz, who would undoubtedly be summoned as a witness, and have to go before a jury. Jansen sided with him, because he was convinced that it would go against his friend's nature to see any man—however loath he might be to regard him as a worthy antagonist—with whom he had fought man to man, accused as a criminal, and made to suffer punishment through any act of his. As Kohle, likewise, inclined to this view of the case, it was decided not only to do nothing about the matter for the present, but also to avoid, if possible, any independent interference on the part of justice.

The friends soon after took their leave, all deeply impressed by the gravity of the patient's case and by their visit.

CHAPTER II.

BUT there was one of their traveling-companions who remained behind at the villa. It is needless to say that Homo accompanied them on their visit to his sick friend, not traveling, of course, as others of his race do, in the low compartment reserved for dogs—but in a *coupé* with his master and the ladies; for everybody knew him, and esteemed him highly for his superior traits of character. At the last station he found it too close for him in the narrow compartment. He escaped into the open air, and bounded along by the side of the train for the rest of the way. But as he had gotten out of the habit of taking such youthful runs, and as the way was hot, he made the remaining part of the journey—from Starnberg to Ros-sel's villa—at a snail's pace, and with hanging head and thirsty tongue. Upon reaching the sick-chamber—after having greeted the wounded Felix with a low, half-angry, half-mournful howl—he stretched himself out at the foot of the bed, and nothing could induce him to forsake his resting-place when Jansen took his leave. He pretended to be asleep, and the friends were too much accustomed to respect him as an independent, intelligent being to disturb his rest.

Then, too, he conducted himself; after he had recovered his strength, with exceeding tact and modesty; demanded no particular care or attention from anybody, for he evidently saw that they had little time to spare for him, and accepted with a good grace whatever fell to his share. He would have been much better provided for down-stairs in the kitchen, but he evidently thought it

would be selfish for him to leave his place at the sick-bed for the sake of a better meal, and he passed the greater part of the day at the patient's side; for Felix loved to pass his heavy hand, half in a dream, over his back, and when he was awake to address all sorts of caressing speeches to him.

At other times the sick man let his dim, feverish eyes rove about the studio; examined Kohle's cartoon, which was slowly making progress, nodded gratefully and contentedly to his silent watchers—to whichever one happened to be on post at the moment—and then sunk back again into a refreshing slumber, often with a name on his lips which none of his attendants understood.

The possessor of this name had not appeared in the garden again since that first visit. Her uncle, on the other hand, rode by daily, drew up at the gate whenever there happened to be any one within hail, or else dismounted and, after tying his horse, went into the house, to inquire about the invalid. This did not excite remark, for he was an old acquaintance of the lieutenant, and his niece had made one at the fatal water-party. Zenz, alone, although as a rule little given to pondering, had her own thoughts in regard to the interest which uncle and niece took in an utter stranger, and they only tended to confirm her former surmises.

The reports from the sick-chamber were not the most favorable that could have been wished. The healing of the wound in the shoulder went on, it is true, without interruption—but slowly, on account of the restlessness and feverishness of the patient. On the following Sunday, when Jansen came out again with Rosenbusch and the actor, the fever had, indeed, disappeared; but even now the visits to the sick man were not allowed to last

more than ten minutes, for the physician had strictly forbidden all conversation until the wound in the lung should have completely healed. Rosenbusch's offer to relieve Schnetz was declined—greatly to his sorrow, which was only partially relieved by Felix begging him to play his flute for a little while in the garden under the window. Of Elfinger's proposal to read aloud to him, he promised to take advantage later. He showed constantly how happy the devoted care of his friends made him, and held the hand of his "Dædalus" tightly clasped in his own during the whole of the visit, with a tenderness such as he rarely exhibited before others.

Homo was to have returned with the three visitors, but even now he could not be induced to do so.

On the day after this second visit Kohle was standing down-stair in the dining-room at a time which, according to the orders of the day, he should have devoted to sleep to strengthen himself for his night-watch. But he could find no rest until he finally put his hand to the work that burned within his soul. Although the walls had not yet been prepared for frescoing, but still wore their old stone-gray tint, he had, by way of experiment, set to work to draw with charcoal an architectural frame for his cycle of pictures—a row of round-arched arcades with sturdy Romanesque pillars, resting upon bases connected by a plain foundation. There were just the same number of arches as the Venus legend contained separate scenes, and the panels in the spandrels over the pillars were to contain the portraits of the friends who had assembled under this roof. This portrait-gallery was begun with the beautiful head of Jansen's betrothed, who was certainly well fitted to contest the first rank with Dame Venus (as the latter had been depicted by Kohle's fancy, at least), while at the

end of the row, the round, good-natured face of Angelica, with its merry, flowing curls, peered forth in all its plainness. Zenz and old Katie were to be immortalized among the people in the convents.

Kohle had traced the outlines of the decoration with a bold hand, and had even allowed himself to be so carried away by his delight as to begin to fill in the first panel with its whole sketch ; for he was anxious to convince the ever skeptical and critical Rossel how excellently it would fit into the space allotted to it. But he was suddenly interrupted by an unexpected visit.

In looking back to that first evening in Paradise, the indulgent reader may perhaps find some difficulty in recalling a modest figure that took small part in the bacchanalian excitement of the younger members, and made no noise himself. But, even if the old man with the calm face and snow-white hair should be still unforgotten, the figure that now came tottering into the little hall with unsteady walk, agitated face, and an old straw hat stuck on the side of his head like a drunken man's, would find no recognition.

"For God's sake, Herr Schoepf, what's happened to you?" cried the painter, as he threw aside his crayon. "You look terribly ! Do tell me—"

The old man threw himself on the nearest divan, and gasped as though compelled to draw his breath from some deep well.

"Is it you, Herr Kohle?" he finally stammered out with much difficulty ; "I sincerely beg your forgiveness for bursting in on you in this way, without being announced—but don't let me disturb you. Once more I beg you to excuse me ; but there are times when all one's good manners—no, no, I won't drink anything," he cried,

interrupting himself, for he saw that Kohle had reached out his hand for the bottle of sherry that had been left from breakfast and still stood on the table—"not a drop, Herr Kohle—Oh, God! who would have imagined it!"

He sank back on the sofa again after an unsuccessful attempt to rise, and muttered unintelligibly to himself, as old people so often do.

The painter was greatly shocked. He had always honored this old gentleman as a very model of cheerful equanimity and clear-headedness; and in many of his professional or personal troubles he had often felt disposed to go and ask his advice, which he always gave with great wisdom and gentleness. And now Kohle saw him sitting there helpless and unmanned, like a night-bird that has lost its way in the daylight, and closes its eyes and tries to shrink into itself.

But, at last, the old man appeared to rouse himself by a powerful effort; he opened his eyes wide and attempted to smooth his withered, faded face, fringed with a gray stubble, into the old kindly lines, only succeeding, however, in producing a kind of grin, something between laughing and weeping.

"My dear Herr Kohle," he said, "I must seem to you like a madman; but, if you knew all, you would easily understand why my old brain has been thrown a little off its balance. And you shall know all about it some day; but now—don't be offended with me—you are so much younger, it would be very hard for me to tell you everything. Oblige me by calling the lieutenant—he has had more experience—or no, you are at your work, tell me where I can find Herr von Schnetz. I don't wish to disturb you—"

At this moment he of whom they had been speaking

came into the room, and was, in his turn, not a little amazed when he saw the state his old friend was in. Kohle left the two alone. In spite of his fever for work, he could not find it in his heart to lead the exhausted old man into another apartment.

The latter did not appear to notice his absence. He had not yet let go of the hand Schnetz had offered him, as if, in his agitation, he found it necessary to cling to some support. Notwithstanding his benevolent feelings toward those younger than himself, he was, as a general thing, a man of rather reserved manners, and not particularly lavish of signs of confidence and familiarity.

"My good friend," he said, "be lenient toward me, and listen patiently without interrupting me. For in order to help me you must know my whole sad history, and I can only tell it when I can almost forget that there is any one listening. Sit down here by my side. And now, listen while I tell you something that has not passed my lips for twenty years.

"I was once a very different man from what I now appear to you ; not simply that I was younger and better contented, and had not known what true misfortune was ; but I bore another name, which may possibly have reached your ears. For although I cannot say that I exactly raised it to any particular fame, still, as a born Municher, you have probably heard it mentioned among those who assisted at the art-works of the early part of old Louis's reign, though, to be sure, only as a young apprentice. Even in those days I was not possessed by the demon of ambition, and on the pictures that I painted, as well as on the frescoes that I helped to execute, you will not find even my monogram. From the very first, I had too great a respect for true genius to form an exalted idea of my

own humble qualifications for an artist. By the side of my master, Cornelius, I felt like the sparrow that soared up to the sun under the eagle's wing, and was permitted to enjoy himself royally up there so long as he did not forget that he was, after all, only an insignificant sparrow. However, I was always bent upon letting well enough alone, and consoled myself with the thought that, even if I did possess but a mediocre talent for creative art, I could vie with the greatest masters in the art of living.

"I had a pretty, gentle, sensible wife, two children, who were growing up finely, as much money as I wanted, and more honor than I deserved. For in those days all of us here in Munich were like members of one family, or like soldiers in a *corps élite*—whatever fame was won by the leaders redounded to the benefit of us privates.

"It was a life which seemed to leave nothing wanting to its happiness, and I began to take credit to myself for the many blessings Heaven had poured into my lap. I deluded myself with the idea that although I was not phenomenal as a man or as an artist, I was, on the other hand, something no less rare—a perfectly normal citizen of the world, a truly model specimen of honesty and excellence, especially selected by fate to be a source of joy and imitation for less favored mortals. My good wife, too, who did not at first chime in with my lofty tone, was gradually converted to this state of self-exaltation, until she came to believe that not a single flaw could be found in her husband, her children, her friends, her home life, or even in her pets.

"I will not recount to you the ridiculous details of our pride and self-complacency. Enough! This audacious structure of conceit and Phariseism received a blow one day that sent it tumbling in hopeless ruin about

our heads. One evening, quite late, while I was sitting on my scaffolding in the palace, painting, my wife tottered up the steps looking like a picture of despair. She had not even stopped to reflect whether there were others about us who might overhear our conversation ; her horror at the terrible discovery had so unbalanced her clear mind that she could not wait until I came home, but ran into a public building after me to tell me that our daughter—the only child we had, besides a fine, sturdy boy—a girl on whom I had lavished all my fatherly pride—that she, our jewel, so loved and treasured— But I must retrace my steps a little, so that you may understand all this.

“About this time my wife having come into possession of a very considerable fortune, we had begun, contrary to the Munich custom, to keep open house. As model beings, for such we fancied ourselves to be, we even regarded it as a sort of duty not to hide our light under a bushel. And then, besides, it was a pleasant enough thing to do, and even now I can’t condemn our having rebelled against the narrow-hearted, inhospitable custom of the place, and admitted all manner of good friends to enjoy our domestic happiness with us. But even here our pride in our daughter played an important rôle. The girl was not beautiful, nor even what one would generally call pretty ; she had inherited my flat features, little eyes, and large mouth. But something sparkled in those eyes that attracted everybody ; and when the large red mouth, with its white teeth, expanded in a laugh that seemed to come straight from the heart, it was impossible to help feeling merry too. She had a remarkable talent for communicating her high spirits to her circle of young people, and this mirthfulness often

reached the wildest extravagance ; though, with her, it never went beyond proper limits, so that I, in my blind adoration, was wont to say to my wife, when she occasionally shook her head over it: 'Let the child alone, her nature will protect her better than all our art.'

"I knew that others thought differently ; indeed, I was often obliged to listen to warnings, more or less distinct, from this or that friend, to draw the reins tighter ; a young untamed thing like her would be sure to bolt some day or other. For hints like these I had always the same superior smile, and only told my wife of them that I might laugh at the Philistinism of my colleagues.

"The daughter of such a thoroughly well-balanced person, surely one could confidently leave her to herself, in cases where there would have been danger for weaker natures.

"And now came the discovery of our shame ! Now came the fearful fall from that height to which we had soared in our dreams !

"Any other man would have turned his eyes inward, would, before all else, have taken himself to task and looked upon the sad and terrible occurrence as a just chastisement of his foolish blindness. But this model man was superior to all such weaknesses. Oh, my good friend, it is not true what philosophy teaches, that the real nature of a man cannot be changed ; that it is only his outward conduct that gradually gains a certain power of habit over the true character of the individual. I know this by bitter experience ; of that fool who drove his poor child from his home in her shame and misery and forbade her ever to come in his sight again ; of that childish and cruel father there is not a vestige left in me—so little that I can search my nature for it as much as I will.

With all my other faults and human weaknesses, it is absolutely incomprehensible to me how I could ever have torn my poor flesh and blood from me, and cast it forth into the outside world.

"The child bore herself far better and more nobly than her parents. She declared decidedly that having, as she found to her sorrow, forfeited forever the love of father and mother by her weakness, she would no longer accept anything from their bounty. We thought this was merely a fine phrase. But we soon learned how seriously she had meant what she said. The poor girl suddenly disappeared from our house and the city—and probably from the country—for all our efforts to find her were without result.

"She had persistently refused to give the name of her betrayer, and we were either compelled or tempted to suspect every friend who had been intimate at our house; so that, although appearances were kept up for a while longer, and a plausible pretext was found for the disappearance of our daughter, our domestic bliss was ended at a blow, and soon vanished utterly. She who had given life and charm to the most trifling domestic pleasures was wanting.

"But we had not yet reached the end of our sorrows; our son, too, was to be taken from us. He studied medicine—a quiet, steady, and, to all appearances, a somewhat phlegmatic man; but he had an exceptionally keen sense of honor. When his sister did not return, this and that began to be gossiped about her. The slightest allusion, often a perfectly innocent speech, would throw him into a state of furious anger. It was some remark of this sort that had as its sequel a duel between him and his best

friend. They bore the last joy of our life, bathed in blood, back into our wretched home.

"And now the floodgates were opened. It was all over with our model household. It came out why our daughter had been driven to misery and our son to death. Our friends could not help assuming a certain air of pity toward us, that broke my wife's heart and drove me from the city. I went to North Germany, and there I buried my wife a year later. Soon after I gave up painting. I looked upon engraving, with all its drudgery, as an instrument of chastisement—as a mode of daily forcing down my pride. My dishonored name had become hateful to me, and I had laid it aside when I left Bavaria. But I did not neglect to have an appeal to my outcast child inserted in all the newspapers, begging her to return to her solitary father, to forgive him, and to help him bear his remaining years of life.

"No answer ever came, although I continued to have the notice inserted for many years.

"At last I became thoroughly convinced that she was no longer in this world; and no sooner did this belief, which it had taken ten years to beat into my head, become a settled conviction, than a singular transformation took place in me. I grew calm again, after all my wretched experiences, and at peace with myself; there were times when I had difficulty in recognizing in my present self the man whose guilt and foolishness had worked so much misery. I succeeded so well in outliving my old nature, in working a complete regeneration of my inner man, that I actually felt something like curiosity to see the city in which my predecessor had suffered so much sorrow and shame.

"And so, one day, I came back to Munich, though I

scarcely knew it again, for everything at whose birth I had assisted was now completed, and besides a new world had sprung up. Nor did the old city recognize me either. I had grown a white-headed, quiet, solitary man, bore another name, and lived like a hermit—never going out during the day, unless, perhaps, to visit the studio of one of the younger artists who had settled here since my day. It has sometimes happened that I have found myself in a beer-garden seated next to some boon companion of the days of my prosperity, who had no idea who the silent old man was who was eating and drinking at the same table with him.

“And this is the way I have gone on for six or seven years, counting myself always among the departed spirits, and sometimes startled at the sight of my own face if I chanced to catch a glimpse of it in the mirror. It is incredible, my dear friend, how tough the thread of life is sometimes. For really had it not been for my interest in art, and in some good young friends who have shown me confidence and respect, the whole world would have been a blank to me. Besides, when photography came into such general use, it seemed to me that my graver was a very superfluous sort of thing, of little further use except to multiply copies of business cards, labels on wine-bottles, and other things of that sort.

“So I continued to grow more idle, more contemplative, and, if you like, wiser; except that I myself felt little respect, and sometimes even disgust and loathing, for any wisdom that could haunt such a useless wreck of a man.”

The old man spoke these last words in such a mournful voice, and hung his head so low upon his breast, that Schnetz could not help feeling the warmest pity for him.

At the same time he asked himself with amazement how it could have been possible for them all to have associated with this terribly-trying man for so many long years without having taken the trouble to find out anything about his history.

He now bluntly said as much, inveighing in his bitter way against the wretched state of society in which they lived.

"A fine Paradise!" he growled out, half to himself. "We have a great idea of how necessary we are to one another, and yet the few fellow-men who are worth troubling ourselves about stand in no nearer relation to us than the wild animals did to our first parents. Though, to be sure, in your case we ought not to bear the chief blame. Why did you yourself never feel a desire to break the ice between us? It would have been a healthier thing for you, if you had long ago formed an intimacy with one of us."

The old man raised his head again, but still kept his eyes shut tight, and groped blindly for Schnetz's hand, which he pressed warmly.

"Perhaps it is not yet too late," he stammered, in a trembling voice. "I hope it may still be in your power to assist me in finding a place in life again.

"One morning about a fortnight ago a little sealed packet was brought to me by a street messenger. It bore no address, but when I saw the seal I felt a terrible shock. I recognized it as one I had once given to my daughter—a cornelian, in which was cut an Egyptian scarabæus. I asked the man who had given it to him. A girl, he said, who had given him an exact description of my lodging and appearance; and she had also known my name—my present one—which I have no reason to suppose my lost

daughter had ever even heard of. I was so beside myself with alarm, joy, and a thousand indescribable sensations that I did not break the seal at first; only one thing seemed clear to me in my confusion—before all else I must find the person who had sent the messenger. Did he know where she was to be found? I asked. But she had engaged him in the street, had paid in advance, and had then immediately disappeared round the next corner. And then he described her! It was my lost one, feature for feature, and yet it could not be she herself, for this one must have been about as old as my daughter was when I cast her off. So it must be the *child* of my lost darling! And to think that she, too, should flee from me like her poor mother!

“At last I tore the string off the packet, and there fell out a letter and two small pictures—daguerreotypes, such as they used in those days to take on silvered plates—one of them a picture of her mother, the only thing she had taken away with her from her home, the other a young man whose face I had great difficulty in recalling.

“The letter had been written several years before. Only in case of her death was it to come into my hands, she wrote in the very first lines. She had always been a proud child, and guilt and want and her sad life had not changed her. Yet there was a loving, tender tone in her words, a spirit of parting that softens even the hardest and most bitter natures; and as I read her simple confession, in which she accused herself of having robbed me of my happiness and ruined my life—of having offended me beyond forgiveness—it seemed as if my heart would burst. She could never prevail upon herself to return to me; at first from fear that I would renounce her a second time, and later, because she did not want to become a

fresh burden to me. She knew that I had taken another name, and was living in the strictest seclusion. If she should suddenly appear with her child, it might not be convenient for me. But, when she should be no more—and this must be soon, for her lungs grew weaker every day—she begged me not to let the child suffer for the wrong her mother had done me. It was a good child, unspoiled as yet, but with little sense and very giddy. She needed a father's hand to guide her through her years of danger. She had appealed in vain to the child's father in the first years after his desertion of her. But, when no answer came, she had taken an oath that he should be dead to her forever. She had found no difficulty in keeping it, for she hated him now as much as she had once loved him.

“For the child's sake she would now speak his name for the first time in eighteen years, so that if he should still be alive her father might call him to account and force him to make provision for his orphaned daughter.

“And then followed a short word of farewell and the name of my child, and beside it in brackets that of her betrayer, which was also on the back of the daguerreotype, where, with his own hand, he had written some words of presentation to my daughter.

“Give me a glass of water, my dear friend. My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, as if I had swallowed the dust of a whole graveyard! So—thank you—and now I shall soon have done.

“For I shall take good care not to tell you how I have spent my time since the receipt of this legacy. I sometimes realized myself how much like a madman I must have looked as I rushed about the streets, at all hours of the day and night, peering under the hats of all the young

girls, and forcing my way into the houses wherever I caught the faintest glimpse of red hair at the window."

"Holy Moses!" interrupted Schnetz, springing up and pacing the hall with long strides, all the while furiously twisting at his imperial. "Why didn't you tell us this before? Why, it must be our Zenz!"

The old man bowed his head with a sigh.

"I first learned it, or rather guessed it, yesterday, when I happened to meet Herr Rosenbusch, and he told me of all that had happened here. It came upon me like a flash; this red-haired servant and my granddaughter, who felt so little desire to know the grandfather who had cast off her mother, are one and the same person. I could hardly wait for the morning before coming here and clasping to my heart the one thing that still belongs to me in this world. But as I entered the park a short time ago, my knees scarcely able to carry me from excitement, and saw from a distance, through the branches, the red hair and the round face with the red lips and the short nose—she stood in the very centre of the lawn raking together the new-mown hay—I stepped up to her and cried, 'Don't you know me, Zenz?'

"And then, instead of throwing herself into my outstretched arms, she gave a cry, as if a wild beast were upon her, and started off down the garden as fast as she could run, and I after her, pursuing her around the lawn and shouting out the most heart-rending words and entreaties, until she saw her chance, pushed open the gate and escaped from me into the road.

"In spite of my sixty years I am no crippled invalid, my dear friend, and in the midst of all my wretchedness and grief my anger at this futile and ridiculous chase, after a foolish thing who refused to understand how well

I meant by her, got the better of me, and I put forth all my strength to overtake her. But the foolish thing sped away from me, as blind and deaf as if death itself were at her heels. I believe she would have thrown herself under the wheels of the locomotive that was approaching rather than have me catch her.

"Then, all of a sudden, I felt shocked at this unconquerable fear and loathing in so young a heart, and stood still and called to her to have no fear—that I gave it up. And then, when I saw her flee into the thick wood to the right, I faced about and dragged myself back to the villa. For the first time I realized how my limbs shook, and what a miserable figure I should cut in your eyes. But you are old enough, Herr von Schnetz, to no longer feel amazed at any fate, however sad and strange, that may befall a man. I felt I could tell you all this; and now I have come to the end of my foolishness and of my wisdom. For, after what I have just experienced, I can scarcely hope ever again to approach the legacy left me by my poor daughter. I have become a scarecrow; the warm nest I would offer to the child seems more terrible to her than the haystack or fence under which she can crouch for a few nights, before starting off upon her wanderings again."

CHAPTER III.

SCHNETZ, who all this time had never ceased to stride up and down the room, now stepped up to the old man.

"Sit still where you are, Herr Schoepf," he said. "Stay here where it is cool until you are thoroughly rested. Meantime I will go and find the girl, and talk to

her. She has a liking for me, possibly because I have never tried to win her favor."

With these words he left the old gentleman. He first searched through the house and garden after the frightened bird, but finally had to make up his mind to go into the wood after her.

After much unsuccessful searching and calling, he finally saw her white face and red hair shimmering from out the green shadows, in a little cleared spot on the gentle slope of the grove, from which she could command a view of the entrance of the park.

"What a trouble you are making, Zenz!" he shouted to her. "What are you running about in the lonely wood for all the forenoon, when there is enough to be done in the house? Old Katie has worked as hard to find you as if you had been a needle in a haystack."

The girl had hastily sprung from the mossy seat on which she had been crouching, and seemed to be holding herself in readiness to dart away. Her round cheeks had suddenly flushed crimson.

"Is he still there?" she asked.

"Who? Don't be so childish, Zenz. The idea of running away from a good old man, as if he were Satan himself!"

"I won't go home till he has gone," she said, with a defiant shake of her head. "I know what he wants. He wants to lock me up in his hateful, lonely house, where no sun or air gets in. But *I* have never done him any wrong, and I won't go—I won't bear it—I'd rather have him kill me right here."

"You're out of your senses, girl! Do you know him? What do you know about him?"

She did not answer immediately. He saw how wildly

her young breast heaved, how her eyes were fixed on the ground, and how her teeth bit the little twig she held in her hand.

"He is the father of my mother!" she finally burst out, her face taking on a look of intense hatred. "He drove my poor dear mother out of his house because of me—that is, before I ever came into the world. Oh, he is so stern! My mother never dared to go back to him as long as she lived. Then, when she was going to die, she wrote a letter to her father asking him to take care of me, and she made me promise by all that was holy to carry this letter to my grandfather as soon as she was dead; and I promised I would, though I never could get up much love for him, and no one can blame me for it either. But, when I came to Munich, I felt terribly forlorn and forsaken at first, for I didn't know a soul, and I thought to myself I'll just take a look at him and see what he's like. So I waited in front of his house, with my packet in my pocket, until he went out in the evening. I tell you truly, Herr Lientenant, I was so miserable and unhappy that even if he had only looked just the least bit kind I would have been very glad to go up and say to him: 'I am Zenz; people say I am the very image of my poor dear mother, and my dear mother was your daughter, and now she is dead and sends you this letter!' But when he came out of his house so stern and still, and looked neither to the right or left, but only stared at the ground, just as if he didn't care anything at all for the dear world all about him—hu! it made my flesh creep! Nothing in the world shall ever force me to have anything to do with him, thought I to myself; and I let him go by as if he had been a perfect stranger. Still, I thought I would leave the letter for him, so I

made some inquiries about him of his landlady. And I heard from her that he hides in his lodgings like an owl in a hollow tree ; no one comes to see him, and he goes to see nobody ; he gets no letters and he writes none. There was a little looking-glass hanging in the landlady's room, and I happened to see my face in it, and it looked to me as if I had an ashy-gray skin and faded hair. I think most likely the glass was colored blue, but for all that I felt as if it was warning me—'This is the way you'll look before long, if you shut yourself up with your grandfather in his dark den where no sunbeam will ever reach you.' So I went away and took good care not to deliver my packet, for it might have betrayed me. And that very same evening I got acquainted with Black Pepi, and went to live with her, and never sent him my poor, dear mother's packet until I went into the country. But how he found out where I was, or what he wants of me—for he must have the sense to see that I don't want to have anything to do with him—I—"

"Zenz," interrupted the lieutenant, "be a sensible girl, and at least get acquainted with your only relation before you rebel against your mother's last wish. I can assure you you wouldn't have any fault to find with him ; and if he should treat you like a prisoner or try to coerce you in any way—are not your old friends at hand ? Do you suppose that Herr Rossel, or the baron, or I myself, would suffer any one to ill-treat our little Zenz ? If you could only hear the old gentleman talk, and see how sorry he is for all he did and did not do for his daughter, and how anxious he is to atone for it to his grandchild ! No, Zenz, you are too sensible a girl to be so childishly frightened by the spectres your own imagination has called up. And, besides, what do you think is going to become of

you when the summer is over and we all go back into the city again?"

He waited a moment for her answer. But as none came, and she seemed to be lost in thought, he drew a step nearer, and, taking one of her hands, said, in his true-hearted way :

"I know what you are thinking, my child. You are in love with the baron, and you are thinking you will remain near him as long as it is possible, and then perhaps he will love you in return ; and you have no thought for anything else. But you ought also to tell yourself how miserably it must all end at last. He won't marry you—you must make up your mind to that—and what will be the upshot of such an unhappy love you have seen, unfortunately, in the case of your poor mother."

She withdrew her hand from his ; but looked at him quietly, and almost with something of her old light-heartedness.

"You mean well by me, sir," she said. "But I am not so foolish as I may look. I never imagined for a moment that he would marry me ; he wouldn't even love me, no, not if I had saved his life and should be near him ever so long. He loves some one else—I know that for certain—and I don't blame him for it a bit, and if I choose to go on liking him, in spite of all that, it is my affair, and nothing that anybody says will make any difference. Until he is well again, and can get up and go about, I am going to stay out here ; and no one knows better than you that I don't eat my bread in idleness, and that you are not able to get along without me. Just tell this to my—to the old gentleman ; and as to what may happen afterward, why, that is something none of us can tell yet. But I won't let myself be caught, and if he

should use force—I would jump into the lake sooner than let myself be made a slave of !”

She turned sharply on her heel and began very calmly to walk up the hill, no longer as if to flee, but merely because she had spoken her last word. Schnetz had always had a secret liking for her, though he had no very high opinion of her understanding or her virtue. But he could not help feeling a certain respect for her as she had just shown herself to him.

“She knows what she wants, at all events,” he growled, “and won’t allow herself to be deceived, not even by her own poor heart. There is good blood in the little red fox.”

Upon returning to Schoepf he exerted himself to the utmost to convince the old gentleman that, for the present, it was useless to try and do anything. But he promised to do his best to reconcile the girl to the thought that she could no longer be her own mistress, but must consent to be taken under the protection of a loving grandfather. It touched him to see how much the old man was encouraged and cheered by the thought that she would come to him in the end. He even began to make plans for the external arrangements of their future life together. As if this were a matter that would not brook the slightest delay, he could not be prevailed upon to stay even until the heat of the day was over. He must go back at once and look for larger and more cheerful lodgings, and must buy some furniture, so that he would be prepared to receive his grandchild just as soon as she felt like coming to live with him. Besides, he did not want to be the cause of the poor child’s wandering about in the woods any longer, for it was clear she would not enter the house again until he had gone.

Schnetz accompanied him through the park. When they were almost at the gate he asked :

“Don’t you propose to take any steps to find out the whereabouts of the child’s father ? Or do you know that he has died since all this happened ? ”

The old man stood still, and his eyes took on that stern expression which had scared off Zenz that night in the street.

“The scoundrel ! ” he cried in a loud voice, passionately striking the gravel path with the umbrella that he always carried in summer. “The miserable, perjured villain ! Can you seriously suppose that I would let myself be outdone in pride by my dead daughter, who would have nothing to do with the author of all her misery, since he appeared to have forgotten her ? Do you think me capable of such a thing as sharing this living legacy of my daughter, that I have just found again as if by a miracle, with that robber of women’s honor—admitting even that he would not now choose to deny all share in it ? I would rather—”

“My good Herr Schoepf,” coolly interrupted Schnetz, “in spite of your white hairs, you are rather more passionate than is consistent with the interest of your grandchild. Now what if anything should happen to you, and the good girl should a second time be left an orphan in the world ? In case the worst should happen, she ought at least to know just where she stands ; to say nothing of the fact that it can never do any harm to a child to know to whom it is indebted for the doubtful privilege of belonging to this world.”

The old man reflected for a moment. His manner grew more gentle.

“You are right,” said he at last. “Scold away at me ;

it is the old artist blood in me that will never listen to reason—not even when all art is passed, and only a little drudgery is left. But that scoundrel—if you knew how cordially we received him into our home! Though there again our pride came into play, for he was a baron, and up to that time we had had no intimates of higher rank than artists, except a few officers; and besides this he was a stranger, a North German, and he pleased us immensely; for he was such a lively, wide-awake, chivalrous young gentleman, a great hunter, and he used to be always saying he would never rest until he had hunted lions in Africa—”

“Good God! Hunted lions? And his name—don’t tell me, my good friend, that his name was—”

“Baron F——. I had actually forgotten the name, until I found it in my poor Lena’s testament. Heaven knows what ever became of him, and whether he was punished for his mad whim, and for all the wrong he inflicted upon my poor child, by dying a miserable death under the African sun, torn to pieces by wild beasts. The name seems to strike you. Can it be that you have ever met the wretch?—or perhaps you even know where he is?”

Schnetz had recovered himself in a moment. He reflected that at best it would be quite superfluous, while it might perhaps be extremely disastrous, if he told the old gentleman in what intimate relations he stood to the individual in question. Neither did he see that it would be of any advantage to the girl, if, before she had begun to feel any love for her grandfather, she should find a father who would be even more of a stranger to her, and who would be able to count still less upon her filial affection. And besides, in the interest of his unsuspecting

old tent-comrade, he shrank from making any premature disclosures.

He answered, accordingly, that it was true the name was not altogether unknown to him; indeed, so far as he knew, the father of the girl was still living; it was possible, however, that they would be doing her a poor service if they should be over hasty in enlightening her on the subject. The first thing to be done was to induce her to become reconciled to her grandfather.

As the old man was, at heart, entirely of this opinion, he took his leave, evidently feeling much comforted and full of glad hopes; though he still lingered a little, secretly hoping he might catch at least another distant glimpse of the shy little creature. But the girl took good care to keep out of sight. So that at last, with a quiet sigh, her grandfather had to set out upon his homeward way. Schnetz stood at the gate, looking after him.

"A mad farce, this life of ours!" he growled under his mustache. "The only thing still wanting is that my old lion-hunter should come riding past his father-in-law, smoking a cigar and gazing complacently at the white-haired old boy, who would be powdered still whiter by the dust kicked up by his nag's hoofs; and that then he should stop here in the park gate, and make inquiries of Zenz in regard to the health of our patient, playfully pinching the child's cheek just as he would any other pretty servant girl's, or giving her a *pourboire* if she held his horse for him for ten minutes. And then his niece, our proud little highness! What big eyes she would make if I should tell her that the little red-haired waiter-girl was her own, though not exactly her legitimate, cousin!"

CHAPTER IV.

WEEK after week had passed away. The autumn was approaching; the rose-bushes on the little lawn shed their last buds, and at evening a stealthy white mist crept over the lake, and for a whole week the opposite shore and the distant mountains beyond disappeared completely behind a dull, gray rain that spread a curtain over lake and land. When at last it was drawn away the same landscape was indeed there, but in different colors; much yellow was scattered among the tall beech woods; the waves of the lake, usually of a transparent green, were changed to a dull gray, and on the summits of the Zugspitz and the Karwendelgebirge could be seen the melancholy white of the first snow.

Even Rossel, who usually regarded the surrounding landscape with great indifference, and who declared the symbolical relations of Nature to our moods to be a sentimental prejudice, expressed himself to Kohle with great displeasure concerning the raw air and the disgusting, clinging fog, which, as he asserted, had come so early this year out of pure malevolence, knowing that they were obliged to stay out here on account of their sick friend. Then, too, the stoves, which had not been used for many years, refused to draw; and they were soon forced to give up heating the dining-room.

Nevertheless Kohle, whose inner fire was still unquenched, would not allow himself to be deterred from working away at his Venus allegory; though Rossel had now lost all interest in it, and even accompanied the progress of the work with open sneers at the idea of their

attempting to naturalize the naked beauty under such a foggy sky.

But then when the autumn sun bethought itself of its might once more, and, at high noon at least, awakened for hours all the charms of a most glorious Indian summer, Rossel still continued in a bad humor, which he was only careful to conceal in Felix's presence. Schnetz soon got at the true cause of his low spirits—the almost contemptuous coldness with which Zenz treated him. His singular passion, which had sprung originally from an artistic whim, was only inflamed the more by this. And now that he had learned the secret of her birth, he grew very melancholy, actually lost his appetite, and, with the exception of the hours he spent with Felix, shut himself up from every one, not even making his appearance at meals. Schnetz came to the conclusion that he had made a formal offer of marriage to the little red-haired witch, and had been dismissed without ceremony.

This strange child bore herself with great coolness in the midst of all these temptations and perplexities. It is true she no longer laughed as much as she had in the summer. Yet she never made her appearance with red eyes, or with any other signs of secret grief, and even when she had to wait on Felix her face was cheerful and unembarrassed. But on the very first day that the convalescent was allowed to go down into the garden, leaning on Schnetz's arm, she unexpectedly appeared before them, her little hat on her head and in her hand a little traveling-bag containing her few possessions, which she had sent over from the inn across the lake. She very quietly announced that she was about to return to the city, as she could be of no further use here. The Herr Baron was as good as well, and within the last few weeks

old Katie had so far succeeded in breaking herself of her taste for schnapps as to be perfectly able to look after the household without other assistance. When Schnetz asked her whether she meant to go to her grandfather she answered, with a fleeting blush, that "she did not know yet herself ; she had managed to get along without him hitherto, just as he had without her. She wouldn't swear that she wouldn't go to him ; she must get to know him better first. But she would never let herself be robbed of her liberty !"

Felix had listened in amazement, for he had not yet been initiated into old Schoepf's history. He spoke very kindly to the good child, and held her hand for a moment tenderly in his. She suffered him to retain it without returning his gentle pressure, and looked quietly past him as though she would say : "That is all very fine, but it can do me no good." Then she allowed Schnetz to exact a promise from her that she would write him her address as soon as she found a lodging-place, and, with a last "Adieu, and a quick recovery !" she marched out of the gate with such a quick and resolute step that it would never have entered any one's head to suppose that this was a parting at which her heart had bled.

Rossel, of whom she took no leave, sank into still deeper melancholy when he learned of her departure, and the innocent Kohle, who was always the last to notice anything that was going on about him, contrived to pour oil on the fire by exhausting himself in eulogies of this remarkable girl, who was missed now in every nook and corner. He was forced to content himself with immortalizing, from memory, her little nose and golden mane, as he called it, in the scene at the cloister ; in which

effort he succeeded but poorly, according to the judgment of Fat Rossel.

And so, in spite of the cheerful autumn days, the atmosphere in the villa was none of the brightest. Even in the case of the convalescent Felix, the more he felt his strength increase, the less did he seem to rejoice in the new lease of life that had been granted him. Those words of greeting from his old love, that had made him so happy in his feverish dreams, had vanished from his memory upon his return to perfect consciousness. He only knew that her uncle had received daily bulletins of his condition, and that they would not leave Starnberg until all danger was over. But they might easily have shown as much sympathy as that to a stranger, with whom they had chanced to stand in merely formal relations. For the rest, in what respect had the situation been changed by his adventure? Altogether to his advantage? A life and death struggle with a boatman about a waiter-girl! Surely a dubious test, that, of the correctness of his principles regarding looseness and freedom of morals; a new proof of how correctly she had acted when, with a single sharp cut, she severed her life from his. And now, under what pretext could he give her an explanation of the real origin of the whole affair? And what further interest could she take in the doings of one whom she had wholly given up? What did it concern her whether, in pursuing his own wild courses, he showed himself more or less unworthy of her?

But the pride which rebelled against making any overtures secretly gnawed at his heart. More than once, after the wound in his hand permitted him to scribble a few letters, he had sat down to write to her uncle. In doing so, he could certainly put in a word in explanation

of the very innocent occasion of his bloody adventure. But in the midst of his writing it would seem to him as if, according to the old saying, he were making the evil worse with every excuse. And then, could he ever hope to explain away that sin—which was in her eyes the heaviest—his dancing with the girl?

So he tore up the letters he had begun, and, gnashing his teeth, resigned himself to the fate of suffering unjustly, and being better than he seemed.

But one day when, by some chance or other, he found himself sitting alone on a bench in the garden with none of his watchers near—for they took care to keep him out of the reach of all conversation—he saw, with a glad throb at heart, her uncle gallop up and gleefully wave his hand to him over the park-gate. He stood up, and, with a faint blush, half of weakness, half of confusion, advanced several steps to meet the well-known face.

The lively old gentleman rushed upon him, and embraced him so cordially that Felix had to smilingly beg for forbearance, on account of his scarcely-healed wounds. Whereupon the uncle excused himself in great alarm, and, carefully supporting the patient, led him back to the bench, where he asked him, with the most candid curiosity, for all the particulars of the unfortunate occurrence.

“A blessed land, this Bavaria!” he cried, rubbing his hands. “Upon my word, there is no need for a man to go beyond the ‘Pillars of Hercules,’ or among the red-skins: he can have plenty of slaughter nearer home, in his own German fatherland! But now, out with the truth about this girl who was the cause of the whole scrape. The moment I heard you were wounded I asked: *Où est la femme?* When I learned she had crossed over

with you in the boat, and had been nursing you— No, don't deny it, you young sinner! The little witch—she is said to have red hair, too, and red hair always was dangerous to you—ha, ha! Do you still remember that crazy, mysterious adventure—the one with the red-haired Englishwoman at the sea-shore?—ha, ha! And now, again— But what's the matter with you, my dear boy? You turn red and white in a breath—maybe you've been staying out a little too—”

Felix rose to his feet with evident exertion. His brow was clouded; his eyes glared strangely at his jovial old friend.

“Uncle,” he said, “you have been wrongly informed. However, that makes no difference. The girl, who is no more to me than that mad fool of a boatman, has left the house again, and with that it is to be hoped this whole wretched affair will be at an end. But that you should touch upon that other matter again, when you know how painful the remembrance of it is to me—”

“I beg a thousand pardons, my dear boy! It slipped from me, as it were. You know that, in spite of my fifty-one years, I am the same incorrigible old *étourdi*; but now I swear by all the gods and goddesses, never again will I make even the slightest allusion— Why, he has grown quite pale!—this firebrand of a fellow! Look here, my dear boy, you ought to take much greater care of yourself, and guard yourself much more carefully against excitement. I had been meaning to propose to you to come over and stay with us, for, after all, we have the best right to nurse you; but since you really are weaker than I thought, and as certain emotions might perhaps—”

Felix stared at him in blank amazement. Then he burst out in a forced laugh.

"You are joking, uncle. Or perhaps, after all, you are speaking with more design than you would have me believe. I go and live—with you! You are very kind; but really, well as I know that all is over, still I should hardly like to guarantee that certain emotions might not—"

He broke off, and passed his hand over his forehead.

"You are right, my boy," replied the uncle, seriously. "It is still a little too soon. Still, sooner or later this whole absurd, lagging affair must be set right, and the sooner the better, in my opinion. Just think it over. The country is just the place for arranging such a matter easily and comfortably. If you would prefer to speak with her alone first, you have only to give me a wink."

"Is this merely your private opinion, or are you perhaps acting—"

"Under higher orders? Not yet, unfortunately. But you know my diplomatic talents. If you will only give me full powers—"

"I am sorry, uncle, but I really am too weak to talk any longer in this jesting way of matters which, after all, have their serious side too. Excuse me for to-day; I must go back to the house; and, in conclusion, I must beg of you not to exert yourself at all in my interest. You see I am quite well, under the circumstances—as well as I could wish all men were—and after I have passed a few weeks more in the country—"

He tried to speak lightly; but he sank back upon the bench, and could only motion with his hand for the old baron to leave him, for a sudden throbbing pain in his wounded breast deprived him of speech. The uncle stam-

mered out a few frightened words, and then hastened back to his horse, which he had tied outside the park-gate. He mounted thoughtfully, and rode off shaking his head. There were some things about the young people of nowadays that went beyond his comprehension.

CHAPTER V.

A FEW weeks after this meeting, Felix wrote Jansen the following letter :

"VILLA ROSSEL, last of October.

"The spirit moves me to talk with you, old Dædalus; and as my physician has seriously impressed me with the duty of sparing my lungs, I may neither look you up myself nor tempt you to come out here to me. So I must force you to puzzle out these awkward copy-book letters of mine, in which you will recognize the handwriting of your pupil as little as you will his customary style.

"For, between ourselves be it said, things still look rather blue and gloomy to me. Our friends won't have told you this ; before them I have played the lively, joyous Hotspur, merely in order to make them think there would be no danger in leaving me out here alone. I can no longer reconcile it to my conscience to exile my good host from the city, even though he does put such a good face on the matter ; and then there is Kohle too—hard as it is for him to tear himself away from his bare walls, he can't go on with his work until he has first made the necessary designs. What do I lack here except that one thing which is lost to me forever? You need not fear that I shall become a prey to misanthropy or schnapps,

like old Katie. I should be ashamed to show myself to Homo, who is looking at me now while I write, with his wise, sensible, true-hearted eyes. Perhaps he is asking me to send you his love.

“But to stay out here awhile in solitude will be of equal service to my slowly-healing breast and to my poor, somewhat discouraged soul. Don’t let yourself be deceived, old Hans, by what our friends try to stuff into your head : that my anxiety about whether I shall soon be able to use my hand again in the service of the arts is gnawing at my heart. More has been injured in this case than a finger-muscle or a joint ; my hopeful confidence has been shattered—that courage and audacity with which I came to you in the summer. If I had ten sound hands I would bethink myself ten times before I again sent them to school to you, for I am as good as convinced that at the very best they would only have acquired mechanical proficiency ; while a true work of art requires much more, for which they would hardly have the right sort of tools.

“You prophesied this to me in the first hour of our reunion. Then I set myself up to be wiser than my master. And now can you guess how I found out that you were right ? I know it is mortifying, but I must confess it. During all the pleasant weeks I passed in your workshop I never once felt so much myself, never felt myself so ‘at the height of my existence’—as Rossel would call it—as in those moments when I was bringing an oarless boat safely to shore, and afterward when I was struggling, hand-to-hand, to defend my life against a furious, murderous scoundrel.

“That a man may be a very tolerable bully and desperado, and at the same time be a great sculptor, your celebrated Florentine predecessor, Benvenuto, has shown.

Though then, to be sure, the days of a nobility of force were not yet over, and many things were demanded of a complete man which are now divided among many by our present system of division of labor. Artistic creation and practical execution are now distinct, and you were quite right in saying that the clay in which I was called upon to work was to be found in public life.

"But where shall I find a material that will not melt away under my hands?

"You would be no worse off in a desert of sand than I am in this bureaucratic, well-regulated, red-tape civilization of ours, that never permits a man to dig into the lump and stamp his own individuality upon this commonplace routine; and, after all, it is that alone which could give any personal satisfaction to a man constituted as I am—this feeling, akin to the one you have in art, of having created something which every other man could not have produced just as well by merely following a certain formula.

"It may be that my experience in my own narrow little fatherland has given me a false idea of what a man inclined to action has to hope and to fear in this Old World of ours. Perhaps if I could find a position in the North German Confederation!—but even that wouldn't help me; at least I have known Prussian Landraths with whom I would not have changed places—men, the highest aim of whose ambition was to succeed to a chief magistrate's position, with a white head and a soul grown gray in the dust of official documents.

"No, my dear fellow, Schnetz unquestionably used the right expression. I have stumbled into the wrong century. I should have done very well in the middle ages, when the old savage and unruly spirit was every-

where to be found side by side with a struggling civilization, and when one could be a good citizen and yet go armed to the teeth. But since this wretched anachronism cannot now be helped, I will at least do my best to seek out a place where a bird of my plumage won't be stared at like a strange fowl in a hen-yard, and crowed over by every well-conditioned cock.

"I have seen quite enough of the New World to know that I shall be more in my proper place there than here. Don't imagine for a moment that I over-estimate that promised land; the positive, human, heart-quicken-
ing possessions and enjoyments that it has to offer are few. But of this very same unattractive nothing, from which something can be made, there is blessed superabundance there.

"Consequently, I have made up my mind, as the Yankees say, to cross the wide water again, and to settle down there permanently. Salutory and necessary as this step is for me, I know well that parting is not such an easy matter. And for that very reason I want to make my preparatory studies for it out here in the deepest solitude. I want to accustom myself to doing without all sorts of things, and at the same time to let my body get as hardy again as it is necessary to have it over there.

"I hope to attain this result in a few months. And then, before I shake the dust of the Old World off my shoes, I will come to you again, my oldest, best, and truest friend. All was not as it should have been between us; but for that no one was to blame but time itself, which did not leave us just as we were when we parted ten years ago, but has brought to each of us many strange experiences, such as even the best of friends can only understand when they have borne them together. And

how much has happened even in the last few months, which each is forced to keep locked up in his own breast ! To you has been accorded a great happiness ; to me have come all sorts of renunciations and bitter experiences. Such things do not go well together. But, now that you have almost seen the last of me, allow me, at least a little more than heretofore, to share in your happiness, and to bask, though but for so short a time, in our old friendship. Hereafter I shall have plenty of time to sit in the shade.

“Remember me to Fräulein Julie. I have only exchanged a few words with her. But when I say that I think her worthy your love, you will know how highly I esteem her.

“This is the third day that I have been scribbling at this letter. After every half-page, my wound begins to give warning again. However, to hold a sword or to cock a musket is not such exhausting work as to guide a pen. Old Berlichingen managed to get along, though in a far worse plight.

“Remember me to our friends ; I look forward with the greatest pleasure to seeing them again, and to celebrating my last German Christmas with you all. And now good-by, old fellow ! *Hic et ubique*,

“Your FELIX.”

CHAPTER VI.

WHEN Jansen received this letter he was at work in his studio making a bust of his child. Julie sat at his side looking on ; little Frances crouched in a high chair

and asked a great many droll, sage questions ; and in spite of the gray autumn sky it was cozier in the large room than in the old days, when the summer air came wafted in through the wide-opened windows. Even now a sparrow flew in, now and then, through the only open pane, and a great nosegay of autumn flowers stood on the window-sill. A small fire flickered in the stove, and Julie's beautiful face and the child's wise eyes gave out a warmth which had once been sadly wanting here. Yet, notwithstanding this, Jansen's brow still remained clouded ; and he left it to his friend to answer the questions of the child, while he worked on in silence.

For weeks she had been aware of this shade upon his spirits without having been able to discover its cause, and to cheer him up she had begged him for a bust of the child. Heretofore she had never come to his studio unless accompanied by Angelica. Now she came every day with the child, who was passionately fond of her, staid the whole forenoon, and then took little Frances home with her to dinner, which was always a fresh treat to the little one. Yet delighted as her friend was at this arrangement and at this confidential intercourse with his beloved, the shadow that rested on his spirits did not depart. At last she asked him directly what it was that oppressed him. She earnestly besought him to tell her, claiming it as her just right ; for unless he did so she would be compelled to think that she herself was the cause of his sadness. The fresh outburst of passion with which he greeted this speech, and which she herself was continually obliged to keep within bounds, ought to have satisfied her on this point. But his strange depression was still left unexplained. She must have patience with him—he had entreated of her time and time again. Things would

get better and come out all right in the end. He loved her far too well to embitter her life with all the wretched troubles he had to deal with. If she could help him in any way he would not spare her or be ashamed to call upon her for aid.

And now when he had finished reading Felix's letter, he handed it, in silence, to his sweetheart, and stepped to the window while she read. For a time it was perfectly still in the great room ; little Frances had clambered down from her high chair, and was busily engaged in dressing and undressing a doll that Julie had given her only that morning. No sound could be heard but the singing of the fire in the iron stove and the hopping of the birds on the shelf above, where the plaster casts stood.

Even after Julie had read the letter to the end, she did not at once break the silence. Not until some time had elapsed did she send the child up to Aunt Angelica with her love, and the question whether she might be allowed to stay up there for a quarter of an hour. Then she stepped up to the window where Jansen stood in silence, laid her hand on his shoulder, and said :

"Now if I should guess what it is that secretly troubles you, my dearest friend, would you confess it to me then ?"

He turned, and passionately folded her in his arms. "Julie !" he said—"what good would that do ? There are some difficulties that are insurmountable. I can only feel sure you have not vanished from the world when I hold you to my heart, press my lips to yours, feel my hand in yours—"

"Be still !" she said, smiling, and gently disengaging herself from him. "I didn't send Frances away for you to forget all that you have so solemnly promised me.

Let us be sensible, my dear friend—indeed we *must* be. Sit down over there, and try, for once, to listen to me, instead of looking at me. Do you know, I consider it positively discourteous of you to pay no attention to my wisest words, merely because, after such a long acquaintance, your eyes still find something about me to ‘study?’”

“O Julie!” he said, and a sad smile passed over his face. “If words could only help—if the sense and understanding and all the strength of soul of a noble woman could but avail against the treachery and unreasonableness of gods and men! But speak, and I will close my eyes and listen.”

“Do you know, you and your young friend are sick of one and the same illness?” she now said, for he had covered his eyes with his hand and taken a seat on the sofa, while she stood leaning upon the window-sill.

“I and Felix? I don’t understand you.”

“You have both come into the world too late, you are both wandering anachronisms, as he says of himself alone in his letter. His energy and your artistic nature to-day no longer find the soil and air that are good for them, and that they deserve. When I look about me, dearest, I say to myself: ‘Where are now the people, the prince, the century to appreciate this power, to lay commissions, reward, honor, and admiration at the feet of this creative spirit? to post sonnets on the door of his workshop, to make a passage for him when he strides among the multitude, as we read that the ancients did, and the great men, under the rule of the famous popes and the pomp-loving princes?’—Oh! my dearest friend, I could weep tears of blood when I think how, instead of all this, you live here, appreciated only by a circle of good friends and enthusiastic disciples, and are made the butt of stupid malice or blind

ignorance in all the newspapers ! And then, when a demand arises for the production of some work to adorn a square or a building, wretched quacks, who are not worthy to unloose the latchet of your shoes, come running up by all sorts of back-stairs and secret ways, and steal the prize away from you, and you remain hidden in the dark ! Now, don't shake your head ! I know how you think about the applause of the masses, and how little you begrudge it to the poor wretches who hear no divine voice within them. But be honest now—if this monument”—she mentioned the name of a man to whom a statue had just been erected, on which occasion Jansen's application had, as usual, been rejected—“if this commission had fallen to you—and then another had followed close upon that—how differently you would stand in your own esteem when you had become a central figure of your time ! To say nothing of the fact that then you would be able to close the factory, as you call it, next door, and would have no need to strike a blow of the mallet that did not come straight from the heart !”

She had talked herself into a state of great excitement ; and now, when he looked up at her, the shining brightness of her look and the soft glow of her cheeks enraptured him. But he controlled himself and remained seated.

“What you say is all very wise and true,” he said. “But for all that you don't quite hit the sore spot. I have known all this ever since my eyes were first opened to what went on around me, to what some people produce and other people admire. Yet in spite of that I have become what I am, and what I could no more have helped becoming than I could have helped coming into the world. Remember, too, how much better off I am than

our friend Felix. As far as the outside world goes, we are both hampered and confined. The age has as little appreciation of high art as of the great personal activity toward which all his powers and wishes urge him. But I can at least put before myself and a half dozen true friends what there is in me, even if it has no fuller life than this; while our friend's special strengths can only reveal themselves in putting him at odds with everybody.

"And, when I look about me here, will not all these dumb creatures of mine continue to be my companions through life? I sometimes seem to myself like a father who has a number of daughters, all of them well brought up and each dear to his heart; and yet, loath as he is to lose any one of them out of his sight, it seems harder and harder to him, as the years go by, that no one of them finds a husband, and they all remain under his roof unprovided for. However, that is fate, and one learns to accept whatsoever the irresponsible powers bestow upon us. But that which comes from mortals—"

He suddenly sprang up, ran his hand through his hair, and stepped so close to his sweetheart, that Julie, little as she feared him even in his anger, involuntarily retreated a step.

"Felix was right," he said, in a hollow voice. "There is only one way of escape. These chains or others—we can never be free except on the other side of the ocean. Julie, if you could only make up your mind, if you feel as terribly in earnest as I do for our happiness—"

"My friend," she interrupted him, "I know what you would say. But the more earnestly I long for your—*our* happiness—the more must I insist upon our striving to attain it in a perfectly prosaic and sober way. Your

friend is a born adventurer, a circumnavigator—a world conqueror. Your world and mine is this studio. Can we take it with us in the ship? And do you think a finer sense of art is to be found among the Yankees or the red-skins than among our countrymen? No, my dearest Jansen, I think that with courage and good sense we shall be able to free ourselves even on this side of the water. You men are masters in despairing, we women in hoping. And, besides, the end of our year of probation is still far enough off.”

“Hope!” he cried, gnashing his teeth. “If a tigress had me in her claws, you might, with far more show of reason, call out to me only to give up hope with life! But this woman! Do you know a more terrible enemy of human happiness than this lie—this cold, rouged, heartless, unnatural lie? If she only hated me as immeasurably as she pretends to love me, truly, I myself should think it too soon to despair. A mortal can become satiated even with hate; and malice, too, is something of which one can get tired. But what is to be hoped when it is all merely a game, and the innermost nature of one’s enemy is the nature of a comedian? Every spark of conscience has been extinguished in this wretched woman since her girlhood; her life is to her nothing but a *rôle*; her love and hate have become merely a question of costumes—applause and money are her highest and holiest conceptions. And she fears for both, if she lets me go free. It is flattering to her—one success more—to be able to pose before herself and the world as an injured innocent, a robbed wife, a mother whose child has been taken from her—and for that reason she refuses all my entreaties and offers with indignation, for she knows well that I would rather give up any happiness in life than let her

have the child. If you had read the letters I have wasted upon her in these last few weeks ! Letters which, I can truly say, were written with my heart's blood—they would have made a tigress human ; and this woman—read what she answers me ! I have carried on this wretched correspondence behind your back, in the hope of taking upon myself all that was bitter and humiliating—for what words have I not stooped to use !—I have borne all the agony of these last weeks, in order that I might at last lay nothing but the happy results at your feet. Now read what sort of echo came to me from that stony heart, and then say whether a man need necessarily be a master in despairing, to give up all hope here ! ”

He went to the large closet, unlocked a drawer, and took out several dainty-looking letters, that diffused a sweet perfume through the room. Julie read one after the other, while he threw himself down on the sofa again and stared at the ceiling. The letters were written in a regular, delicate, clear hand, and in a style which might be taken as a model of diplomatic art. There were no traces of mere declamation, of complaining or accusing. The writer had resigned herself to accept an unhappy fate, for she felt herself too weak and not cold-hearted enough to take up the battle with him : a battle in which the man to whom she had given all stood opposed to her. This she could prevail upon herself to do, for it was only her own happiness that she was sacrificing. But she could never be brought to give up her claim to her child. The day might come when the longing for a mother's love might awaken in the poor child's heart. Then no one should have it in his power to say to her : “ Your mother has no heart for you ; she has given you over to strangers.” Upon passages like this, which were repeated in each let-

ter, especial care had been bestowed, reminding one, here and there, of the stage, and the last rhetorical flourish just before the curtain falls. The last sheet, which had been received only a few days before, concluded as follows :

“I know all, all that you would so carefully conceal from me. It is not only your wish to have done with the past once and forever, and to give me back my freedom—for, according to your idea of my character, it would cost me no effort whatsoever to live as if all were at an end between us, especially as I do not bear your name on the stage. No, I know what it is that not only makes you wish for a complete separation from me, but that makes every delay unbearable. You have fallen into the net of a dangerous beauty. If my old love for you were not stronger than my self-love, there would be nothing I should more earnestly wish for, or would more eagerly aid by all the means in my power, than your marriage with this girl. She would justify me, would raise me to honor again in your eyes, and would force from you the confession that you had cast away your only true friend in order to nurse a serpent in your bosom. But I am nobler than it is for my advantage to be : not, I admit, altogether for your sake. The hope of seeing you return to me is too tempting for me not to be willing to help you to have this experience. But to relinquish our child to this stranger—who is said to be as clever as she is beautiful, and as beautiful as she is heartless—to give my blessed angel, who hovers near me in my dreams, to this serpent—”

Julie had involuntarily read the last few lines aloud, as if she scorned to soften down any accusation that was directed against herself. Her disgust and indignation

would not permit her to finish the sentence—the letter fell from her hand.

“My dear friend,” she said, “let us read no further. I must confess you are quite right; this is hopeless. Kindness is thrown away upon such an unnatural character as you so rightly called it, and force—where is the force that we could use? But as for surrendering—hopelessly, and without striking a blow—no matter how much talent I might have for despairing, if I were opposed to this woman, I would either conquer or die!”

He sprang up and seized her hand. “Julie!” he cried, “you put new life into me. Never shall she enjoy such a triumph—rather let us flee to the ends of the earth beyond the reach of her hand—rather let us go to the Yankees and the red-skins, but with you at my heart and our child in our arms—”

She shook her head earnestly. “No, no, no!” she said. “No self-imposed banishments! It is a good thing I have my thirty-one years behind me. Else this youthful enthusiast might succeed in the end in carrying me off with him, and we should make a great mistake that would soon make both him and me very unhappy. The land across the ocean is no place for you, my beloved master. You have never cared to take part in the modern, sentimental nonsense in our Old World; what sort of a figure would you cut in the midst of all the humbug of the New? And as for your giving up your art, and living only for your wife and child—how long do you suppose you could bear that? How long would it take for the woman for whose sake you had done this to become a burden to you? And even if you could rest content with such a life, do you think I would be satisfied with it? True, I have confessed that I love this man—this violent, wicked, good, pre-

cious Hans Jansen—but I want to see him as great, as famous, as proud, and as happy as it is possible for any one to be in this wretched world ; to love in him not only the husband and father, but also the great master, who compels the whole world to join with me in love and admiration. Oblige me, my dearest friend, by throwing that correspondence there into the stove, and promise me not to write any more. In return I promise you that I will ponder day and night upon the best way for us to free ourselves. And if our year of probation should pass away without our having succeeded before God and man—here is my hand upon it ! I will be yours—if not in the eyes of men, certainly in the sight of God ; and I believe I am old enough to know what an honorable woman ought to do and to answer for.”

CHAPTER VII.

OUR other friends, too, had lost in the autumn mists more and more of that sunny, paradisiacal frame of mind which they enjoyed when we first knew them.

Rosenbusch went daily to his studio ; but he did little there except to feed his mice, and to take his flute out of its case, oil and clean it, without making any attempt to call forth a sound. He would stand for an hour before the “Battle of Lützen,” which was now completed, and heave sighs that sounded anything but triumphant. He had long since prepared a new canvas, on which he was intending to paint the entry of Gustavus Adolphus into Munich, a theme which he hoped would interest even the “Art Association.” But not a stroke of the brush had he

done as yet. To tell the truth, the temperature in his studio was well calculated to scare away the muses, and to freeze up the sweet tones of his flute. Even the mice, who were more accustomed to it, squealed uncomfortably in their little wire cage ; while their friend and master, wrapping the mediæval horse-blanket about his painter's jacket, strode thoughtfully up and down, casting a look of displeasure at the cold stove every time he passed it, as if he despised it as a friend who only remained faithful as long as it was kept warm itself. The money he had last received, for illustrating a book of soldiers' songs, had long since been spent. It is true, a dealer in antiquities had made him a very considerable offer for an old casket with a skillfully-ornamented silver cover, which was said to have originally belonged to no less a person than General Illo. But he could not make up his mind to barter this valuable old relic for vulgar fire-wood. He was too proud to borrow of Elfinger, who had hard work to live himself ; or to reveal the state of his circumstances to the other inmates of the house. If any one chanced to come across him wandering about alone in his strange disguise, he declared, with a beaming face, that he was too full-blooded to bear the heat of a stove. Besides, he was in one of his poetical moods, and was brooding over an epic poem which was to treat of the astonishing and pitiful love-adventure of the Swedish commander with Gustel von Blasewitz. And composing a poem was a very heating occupation, unless the "shade of a laurel-wreath" was there to cool the forehead on which stood the anxious sweat of the muses.

Toward noon he threw aside his horse-blanket and went around to Angelica's room, where it was warm and cozy. The good girl led the same quiet, industrious life

now as before ; sold one flower-piece after another, cheaply but surely ; painted the children of tender parents who had no money to spare for art, but yet liked to see their *salon* adorned with the red-cheeked curly-heads of their own flesh and blood ; and had certainly no good cause for mourning over the pining away of the beautiful summer. And yet, she too was perceptibly depressed in spirits. Whether it was her righteous anger at the flirting and profitless pangs of her red-bearded neighbor, who since the excursion on the water had only been permitted to exchange a few hasty glances and notes with his sweetheart (her father having found out about the Starnberg adventure, and had a scene with Aunt Babette) ; or whether the clouded happiness of her beautiful friend caused her silent pain, or awakened in her breast a very pardonable longing for a similar fulfillment of her own earthly mission—who shall say ?

She herself never suffered a word of complaint to escape her ; and exhibited, particularly to her secretly-betrothed friend, the most contented face in the world. But the change in her spirits did not escape Rosenbusch. He had to submit to be lectured by her oftener than ever, and in a far sharper tone, not only because of his inactivity, but also more particularly because of the aimless and unmanly way in which he carried on his love affair. She would say such harsh things to him about it, that any one else would have run out of the room. But he, meanwhile, would water her flowers with the most penitent and humble mien, would wash her brushes, and end by assuring her that he never felt so well as when she was blowing him up ; he felt then that he had no better friend in the world than she was. But he would not be such a fool as to improve, for he only interested her be-

cause of his faults. She had no appreciation of his praiseworthy qualities, inasmuch as she could not abide poems, *adagios*, and mice. Whereupon she used first to laugh, and then, with a shrug of the shoulders and a meaning sigh, to subside into silence.

Nor did "Edward the Fat" pass his days any more cheerfully, though he was surrounded once more by his city comforts, and was relieved of the hated task of enjoying Nature. For the first time in his life this spoiled child of fortune had a wish unfulfilled, and, what sharpened the sting of the privation, a wish that by no means aspired to far-off clouds and stars, but lay apparently within reach of his hands. Heretofore he had had no cause to complain of the unkindness and cruelty of women. The singular contrast between his indolent, sluggish, and phlegmatic manner, and the keen intellectual power that flashed from his eyes and played about his lips, to say nothing of the contemptuous way in which he was in the habit of treating the proudest and most exacting women, provoked them to enter the lists with him, and to challenge and abuse him, until, very unexpectedly, they found themselves worsted. But now, for the first time, he had encountered a being to whom he was forced to stoop in every sense of the word ; for she was neither beautiful, nor educated, nor particularly prudish, nor even of good birth. And this strange creature treated him with the most persistent coldness, remained as insensible as a stick to his tenderest words and most heart-felt homage, and, finally, slipped out of his hands altogether. For, in spite of all their endeavors, neither he nor old Schoepf succeeded in discovering the girl's hiding-place.

Ever since Schnetz had let him into the secret, Rossel

had become more and more intimate with the old grandfather, and had even proposed to him to accept of a room in his house. The old man, who, in the mean while, had moved into somewhat larger quarters, so as to be ready to receive the girl the moment she should knock at his door, declined this offer, but was very glad to pass his lonely hours in the company of his brilliant young friend. They would spend hours—for neither of them had anything to do—deep in discussions about what was really the main thing in art, or what should or should not be painted; and it was only when they heard the door-bell ring at some unusual time that they would both start up and listen eagerly, hoping it might possibly be the lost girl returning penitently to her best friends.

The only ones whose spirits remained unaffected were Kohle and Schnetz; the latter, because his Thersites disposition had struck its roots too deeply into his nature for him to be either elated or depressed by anything he experienced; Kohle, on the other hand, because, like the happy genii of his Hölderlin, he “soared in the celestial light above,” and was incapable of giving his heart to the fate of mortals, no matter how closely he might be bound to them by ties of friendship, for more than a few hours at a time. During these misanthropical November days, Schnetz, when not engaged in the service of his little highness, sat in his den of *silhouettes*, cut out bitter satires, smoked, read Rabelais at Rossel’s suggestion, and, for whole days at a time, spoke to no one except his pale little wife; while Kohle, in a far more wretched, unheated room, passed his days making new designs which, with fingers stiff with cold, but with a heart all aglow with happiness, he sketched on the back of a large fire-screen instead of on paper, which he had not the money to buy.

Under these circumstances it was not to be wondered at that the two meetings of the Paradise Club, which took place before the end of the year, were not attended by that festal flow of spirits that had characterized most of their predecessors. Old Schoepf stayed away altogether ; Rossel did not speak a word ; Jansen did not make his appearance until nearly midnight, and sat brooding with a dark look in his bright eyes, while he emptied glass after glass without being warmed by his potations. Elfinger, whose relations to his pious sweetheart grew every day more hopeless, and had begun to seriously tell upon his spirits, was scarcely more talkative, and the jokes with which Rosenbusch favored the company had, in Rossel's opinion, a biting flavor, like preserved fruit that has begun to ferment. The younger and less prominent members felt the weight that rested on the whole circle, but were either too modest or too poorly supplied with brains to succeed in enlivening matters at all ; and an uncomfortable feeling began to creep over first one and then the other, that perhaps in the life of their society, as in that of every human alliance, the moment had arrived when a sudden decline succeeds to a period of highest prosperity, and when a swift dissolution appears more dignified and more welcome than a long era of gradual decline and decay.

There was one member who did not make his appearance on these evenings, although he was still in the city and apparently in just the mood for such festivities—namely, Angelos Stephanopulos. This or that one had encountered him, on foot or in a carriage, acting as knight to his lady, the Russian countess, who had been away for a few months, but had now returned to that same private hotel where—though at some distance from the nocturnal

musical orgies—Irene and her uncle were awaiting reassuring reports from Italy. Irene had satisfied the demands of etiquette by making a formal call upon her fellow-lodger, but had avoided any more intimate intercourse.

Upon this point her uncle had submitted all the more readily to his young governess because, at bottom, he felt more aversion than liking for all but martial or dancing music. But another promise which his strict little niece exacted from him, that he would never say a word to *any one* about her former relations to Felix, appeared to him so useless that he did not think it a matter of conscience to keep it any longer than while they were all such near neighbors in the country.

At his first meeting with Schnetz he informed his friend and brother-in-arms of the whole story.

He earnestly besought him to exert all his influence to rouse Felix from his dogged silence. Only a single visit from him—now, in the interesting paleness of convalescence—just to thank them for their sympathy during his illness; and the world must have turned topsy-turvy since he was young, if these two estranged lovers did not make up again.

Schnetz listened to these propositions with his usual morose calmness, abused his imperial terribly, and then remarked—that this commission was not to his taste. He had too great a regard for Felix to help him to a bride who could not love him just as he was, with all his faults and weaknesses. He doubted himself whether he should be doing the young man a favor if he did so. He was keeping house very comfortably out there in the solitary villa, going into the woods every day with Homo and a good double-barreled gun; and even though he did not

shoot much, he unquestionably killed time after a much more manly fashion than if he were here striving to regain the favor and forgiveness of a spoiled princess. Besides, he was intending to put his affairs in order soon after Christmas, and then to set sail in the early spring ; for he had taken it into his head that the air in America would agree with him better than that of his native land.

This announcement threw the uncle into the liveliest state of alarm. He depicted to his friend in such dark colors the future that threatened him, if Felix should carry out this resolution, the prospect of the life-long guardianship of a Fräulein who would soon be getting *passée*, who would grow more whimsical and unmanageable from year to year, and who would make him suffer for the wrong which she herself had done to her own happiness by her proud obstinacy ; he besought him in such moving terms not to leave him in the lurch, now of all times, that finally Schnetz took pity upon him and promised to at least seize the first opportunity to question Felix concerning the real state of his feelings.

For a moment he felt tempted, now that they were on the subject of confessions, to give this lively bachelor, who only wanted to get rid of his ward in order that he might once more enjoy "life" perfectly unrestrainedly, a hint in respect to certain natural duties toward another orphaned child. But a dark presentiment, that possibly a more suitable hour might come for such a disclosure, restrained him. And, moreover, as Red Zenz appeared to have vanished from the face of the earth, there would be no use, for the present, in awakening paternal feelings of which the visible object was perhaps lost for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

THUS the year drew toward its end, and Christmas stood before the door.

In former years they had always had a Christmas-tree at the Paradise Club. But this time the friends felt disposed to celebrate a more domestic festival, in a narrower circle. In the course of this year they had been drawn closer to one another, and had withdrawn more and more from the other members of "Paradise." Nor was Angelica any longer the only representative of her sex among them, and the only one thus excluded from the men's festivals. And so it was determined that Christmas Eve should be celebrated in the studio-building; that the tree should be set up in Rosenbusch's room, and the table laid in Angelica's—a plan which the two neighbors laid before the others as a joint idea of their own. Each deposited his contribution toward the preparations, in a money-box of which Angelica was the custodian.

Nor did Rosenbusch fail to contribute his share, although Angelica tried by all sorts of pretexts to prevent him. How he had suddenly come into possession of money again—for he had not sold any of his work—was a mystery to Angelica, until she helped him to clear out his studio in order to make room for the Christmas decorations. Then she missed the silver-mounted box, his most precious treasure. Upon her reproaching him about the matter he replied :

"What would you have, my dear friend? It is my misfortune to be a single man. If I were the father of a family and could not pay my rent I should be relieved of

all want. For you must know that the Art Society looks at the distress rather than at the talent of those of whom it buys pictures. Help me to a wife, and I promise you not to dispose of another article from my museum."

And then for several days he was in the brightest of spirits, hammering and working as though he were engaged in arranging the studio for his own wedding, and, in the short intervals of rest, taking his flute from its case again.

Christmas Eve came at last. In the afternoon the hermit of the lake returned to the city, with the faithful Homo, who had now become his inseparable companion. Felix's first visit was to Jansen. They were alone together for some hours—hours that carried them back to the time of their early friendship, so freely did each open his heart, and so keenly did they realize once more what they were and always would be to one another. Yet they both avoided touching upon the details of their past, as though it were taken for granted that each had an accurate knowledge of the other's history.

That Jansen was struggling impatiently to free himself from his bonds, and that Felix had given up all hope of ever finding his old happiness again, was all that they confessed. Then they went, arm-in-arm, to visit Julie, who received her lover's friend with all her sweetness and kindness. It did Felix good to be with these two happy people, and he expressed this feeling with so much warmth that Julie thought him extremely charming, and purposely turned the conversation upon his emigration plans in order to dissuade him from them, if it were still possible. But he remained unshaken; and it seemed as if, in spite of all this kind friendship, he could not wait for the time when he should set foot upon the shore be-

yond the ocean. What it was that was driving him away was not referred to by a word.

Before the evening's festival, they separated for a few hours. Jansen and Julie had first to light a Christmas-tree for little Frances and her foster brothers and sisters, and it was eight o'clock when they reached the studios.

Yet they were not too late, but, on the contrary, had to wait for some time down-stairs in Jansen's rooms with the other friends, until Rosenbusch, who was always finding some last improvements to make in the decorations, gave the signal by ringing a hoarse, old hand-bell—like his other treasures, an historically authenticated household utensil of the famous Friedlander.

Besides their intimate circle, Felix, Rossel, Elfinger, Schnetz and Kohle, no one had been invited but old Schoepf. It had cost much trouble to persuade the old man to come, for on this day he missed his lost grandchild more bitterly than ever. Once persuaded, he seemed, in his silent way, greatly touched; though he strove not to disturb the merry mood of the others. Then, too, there was so much to be seen and admired and laughed at in the Christmas room—Rosenbusch had so surpassed himself, had arranged such tasteful decorations, had made so many verses and prepared so many mottoes, that it was a full hour before the distribution of presents was over.

Then when the lights on the tree had begun to sputter and go out, one after the other, Schnetz suddenly produced a box, in which, up to this time, he had kept his present concealed. It was a series of the most amusing silhouettes, which he now passed in review on a white screen by means of a magic-lantern. They represented the events and adventures of the past year, none of those

present escaping without a full share of ridicule. The exhibitor himself was not spared, and it is scarcely necessary to say that his knightship of the rueful countenance was unmercifully made fun of.

While every one was enthusiastically demanding a repetition of this shadow dance, Angelica slipped away to look after the supper, like a careful hostess. At length she reappeared and invited them to table; whereat Rosenbusch ventured to remark that it was high time they should cut a door through the wall so that they might visit one another in a friendly, neighborly way, without having to go round by the cold corridor. The confusion of the moment permitted Angelica, who was usually very strict in keeping this light-hearted red-beard within bounds, to ignore this somewhat audacious remark.

So they entered the other festal hall, in the centre of which stood a tastefully-laid table covered with shining dishes, plates and glasses, ornamented with flowers and surmounted by a slender miniature Christmas-tree, from which hung candy and sweetmeats for the dessert. But we must unfortunately deny ourselves the pleasure of describing the joys of the table, to which this select company now abandoned itself. It is enough to know that it was one of those singularly happy evenings when everything succeeds, when the serious vein is not too heavy, and the merriment not too light, the sentiment not too gushing, and the jollity not too noisy. No one could resist the charm of the cheery present, or brood with sad thoughts upon the past or future; and even Felix and old Schoepf soon had no further need to force their feelings, in order to join in the merry laughter over Schnetz's biting jests and Rosenbusch's inexhaustible drolleries.

Besides all this, the domestic talents of the two ladies

stood the test most gloriously. Angelica's simple entertainment found favor even with Rossel; and a hidden genius was discovered in Julie for brewing an incomparable punch, according to a receipt which she had inherited from her father, the general. It was, therefore, merely an expression of the universal feeling when Rosenbusch rose, and in neat verses, which unfortunately have not been preserved, proposed the health of their two lady-friends, the foster-sisters of this circle, who had so wisely administered the peculiarly feminine office of providing for the earthly wants of poor humanity.

This toast, which was received with the wildest applause, was followed by a number of merry, gallant, and serious harangues; and even the two ladies mustered up sufficient courage to make some pretty little speeches, which, it is true, they did not succeed in finishing without considerable blushing and hesitation.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the midst of a pause that followed the reading of some singularly tender and beautiful verses by the hitherto silent Kohle, the happy party heard the clock on a neighboring tower strike the hour of midnight, and it was only when the twelfth stroke had died away that their solemnly exorcised spirits seemed to wake once more from their enchantment.

Rossel rose, went up to Kohle, and embraced him, calling him "du" for the first time. He declared that Father Hölderlin looked down from his blissful heights upon his son, with whom he was well pleased. The

others, too, roused themselves, and expressed, each according to his fashion, their thanks to the greatly embarrassed poet, to whose health the only one who could have been jealous of him—the poetical Rosenbusch—proposed, amid the enthusiastic acclamations of all, that they should drink the last glass of punch.

Schnetz propounded the question whether sufficient cause could be shown why this was and must be the last glass. But Angelica, although she protested that she wished to exert no pressure upon any one else, persisted, for her own part, in withdrawing; and as the men, too, felt that the festal mood of the evening had reached its height, it was decided to leave the faithful Fridolin to extinguish the lights, and to start together on their homeward ways.

Jansen escorted his betrothed; Rosenbusch offered his arm to Angelica; behind them came Elfinger with Kohle, of whom he had begged a copy of his poem, promising in return to give him a few hints in the art of delivery. Schnetz and Rossel, one on either side, supported old Schoepf, so as to keep him from falling, for he found it hard to walk on the slippery pavement, which was covered over with a thin layer of ice.

The last was Felix. His voice had not been heard for some time back, and no one noticed when, without saying good-night, he turned into a side-street, and went his way alone.

Pulling his hat far down over his face, he rushed as hastily through the raw night as though he were somewhere impatiently expected. His wounds, which were still scarcely healed, pained him; the fiery drink had heated his blood after his long abstinence; and restless, joyless thoughts throbbed through his brain. Before he

was aware of it, he found himself in the square before the hotel where Irene lived. Schnetz had let fall a word, as if by chance, about their having taken other rooms, because of the musical *soirées*. Where ought he look for her window now? They light no Christmas-trees in inns; besides, it was past midnight, and in only a few of the windows was the light still burning.

His eyes fastened themselves unconsciously upon a bright window in the second story. The dark outline of a woman's figure was visible there for a moment; but he could not make out whether it was she who was peering out through the frosted window into the Christmas night. Then the figure drew back again, but he remained.

He stood leaning against a lamp-post, insensible now to the chilling fog and the pain of his wounds. It seemed to him as if he were already on the shore of the New World, and between him and that bright window the broad ocean stretched. Never had he realized so clearly that he could never be happy without this girl, and yet he had never been so far removed from every hope. He said to himself that he must not return to this spot so long as he remained in the city, unless he would see the courage which he had mustered up with so much pain broken again and his determination shaken anew. He must forget once for all that there was a bright window here; he swore it to himself with the full consciousness of how hard it would be for him to keep his vow.

At this moment the light in the window went out. It made a cold shudder pass over him, as if he had received a confirmation of his fears that all was at an end forever. Then he roused himself, and slowly started on the way to his lodgings.

In spite of the late hour, the streets were full of life.

The Christmas mass, which lasted from twelve to one, still kept many pious or curious people on their feet. Felix had not gone far when he overtook two couples, who seemed to be in even less of a hurry than himself. A large, stout woman walked in front, hanging on the arm of a young man who appeared to be telling her some very amusing story, for she laughed incessantly in a deep, coarse voice, every minute turning her head—whose thick, black hair was but loosely wound with a red kerchief—that she might look at the second couple, as if she wondered why they did not laugh too. The latter were not walking arm-in-arm; but the man kept close to the girl and spoke incessantly to her in a low voice, while she walked by his side with drooping head, as though she did not belong to him, and were paying no attention to his talk.

The light of the street-lamp now fell upon the group, brightly illuminating a little hat with a black feather, that sat jauntily upon a gold-red chignon.

“Zenz!” cried Felix in surprise.

The girl suddenly stood still, and looked around her.

“Is it really you?” he cried, hastily stepping to her side. “Where have you been hiding all this time? But I see you are with company. I won’t detain you.”

She still stood there, without moving or answering a word. But her companion, an insolent, dissipated-looking young fellow—apparently a young salesman—took upon himself to reply for her, and declared that he would not allow any one “to strike up an acquaintance with his girl in the street,” in his presence, and without an introduction to him.

With this he offered Zenz his arm to take her to the others, who had only just discovered what was taking place, and were looking round toward the stragglers.

"You have nothing to say here, my good friend," replied Felix, with the greatest coolness. "If Fräulein Zenz has no objection to standing here with me, I have a good deal to say to her, and you can wait until I have done, unless you should prefer to go on. How is it, Zenz? Have you five minutes to spare for an old friend?"

The girl now quickly raised her eyes to his and said, in a timid tone that sounded strangely from her lips:

"Is it true that you haven't forgotten me yet?"—Then, before he could answer, she turned to the others:

"You needn't give yourselves any further trouble about me; I can find my way fast enough. Good-night!"

"Hullo!" cried the young fellow, "that *would* be cool—to drop a man in the street in this style when another comes along. Damn it, sir—"

He had just turned in a threatening way upon Felix, and had called up the others to bear witness that he didn't intend to suffer any such treatment, when the big, black-haired woman recognized Felix, and hastily whispered a few words to the excited man that seemed to make a marked impression on him. He gave vent to a few more furious expressions, and then suddenly burst out into a hoarse laugh. Making an ironical bow to Zenz, and calling a coarse epithet after her, he turned upon his heel and followed the two others, who went on their way as if nothing had happened.

"Nice company I find you in," said Felix, drawing nearer to the trembling girl. "I thought it likely you couldn't feel very happy among them. Come, you must tell me now what sort of people they are, and how you have been living since I saw you last. If I saw rightly, that big woman was the 'Black Therese.' Poor child!

things must have gone very badly with you, to make you take refuge with *her* !”

She hung on his arm, and let him lead her down the street. He saw, with heart-felt pity, how pale and haggard she had grown, and what poor clothes she wore. Nor could she be induced, at first, to speak a word ; yet her breast heaved as if it would burst, and every now and then she stood still and drew a deep breath. But his kind words gradually melted the ice. She told him that she had led a wretched life ; had sought in vain for work, and had finally seen no other way than to go back once more to her old acquaintance, who had taken her in again. But, because she was no longer as merry as she used to be, she had not suited the Black Therese at all ; and she would gladly have gone away from her if she had only known where to turn. The woman had tried to make her acquainted with all sorts of gentlemen, and had scolded her for a silly goose, because she would not consent.

That night the Black Therese's lover had come to take both girls to the Christmas mass. But in the church a friend of his had joined them, and they were just on their way to a public-house to get something more to drink. It had seemed as if heaven had opened to her when she heard Felix's voice. And now, all of a sudden, she felt quite light at heart. How had he happened to come along just at the right time, and how was he getting on, and was he really quite well again ?

She began to laugh again as she asked these questions, with her old happy, light-hearted laugh. All her wretchedness seemed of a sudden to have vanished, and to be forgotten.

“Zenz,” he said, “you must not go back to this black devil of a woman. She will bring you to ruin sooner or

later ; you can no longer have any doubt of that. But now, what do you intend to do ? Have you ever taken any thought as to what is going to become of you ? ”

Her laughing face suddenly grew dark again.

“ Indeed I have,” she answered, with a thoughtful nod of the head. “ I have made up my mind to look on and see how things go until summer ; then, if I am no better off—I’m not afraid of the water. I will take another trip on the Starnberger lake, and, when I am just in the middle, I will close my eyes and spring in. They say it doesn’t hurt at all.

“ You see,” she continued, when he did not answer, “ I shall never be happy in this world ; very few are, and it is all ordered beforehand. So why should I look on patiently while my few young years pass miserably away ? There is no one to miss me when I am out of the world. And if it is all the same to *me* whether I live or not, what does it matter to any one else ? ”

As she said these words, she involuntarily let go his arm, and stood still again for a moment, to recover breath after her quick speech.

He seized her hand.

“ Will you do something for my sake, Zenz ? ” he asked, tenderly—“ a very great favor ? Will you promise me to do what I ask you ?—to go with me wherever I lead you ? You know well enough that I mean well by you.”

She looked at him inquiringly. Then she laid her other hand in his, too. A blush mounted to her cheeks, as if from a sudden glad hope that was almost like a shock.

“ Do with me whatever you like ! ” she said, in an almost inaudible voice. “ I have no one in all the world

but you. Kill me or make me happy, it is all the same to me."

"Come then," he answered, taking her arm again. He knew very well what thought it was that had sprung up within her, and that he must disappoint her hope. But he left her in her delusion, so that she would follow wherever he should lead.

They walked for a quarter of an hour, both in silence, through the dark, deserted streets. At length he stood still before a house, in whose upper story the windows were still lighted.

"Here!" he said.

She gave a start. "Have you moved?" she asked, regarding the house with a look of surprise.

"Here lives the man, Zenz, to whom I want to bring you; he will care for you better than I myself could, even if I were willing to take you with me to a new world. You know whom I mean, child. You did not think of him when you said no one would miss you when you were no longer in the world. Do you remember him now? No," he continued, as she made a movement to escape from him, "I won't let you go; you know what you promised me. The old man sitting there up-stairs—if you only knew how he longs to make up to you for the wrong he did to your poor mother; if you only knew him, Zenz, as we all do—and now he sits there in his lonely room this Christmas-night. The lieutenant has told me of all the things he has brought together, so that he might have some presents ready for his grandchild in case she should hit upon the happy idea of presenting him with herself on Christmas-eve. And, Zenz, if you could only find it in your heart to carry out this thought, even at this late hour, would you not be better off up

there than in the tavern with those blackguards, where you would be given vile stuff to drink, and forced to listen to worse talk? And even if this were not so, and you could not bear to live with him, wouldn't there still be time for that voyage on the lake of which you spoke?"

This last thought seemed at length to turn the scales.

She suddenly burst out laughing again. "I was caught nicely that time," she said; "I positively never thought of such a thing when I promised you I would do whatever you asked of me. But, then, it was very stupid of me; I ought to have known— However, it's quite true that I can try it for a while; it won't cost me my head; and if it doesn't work—why, he won't put me under lock and key, so that I can't get away again. Only you must say to him, in the first place, that I don't particularly like him. I can't conceal what I really feel."

Felix pulled the bell. A sleepy old woman, who acted as servant to Father Schoepf, opened the door. "Good-night, Zenz," said Felix, cordially pressing the girl's hand. "Say for yourself whatever you have to say to your grandfather. And I thank you for having kept your word; you won't regret it. Good-night, and remember me to the old gentleman; and tell him that I heartily congratulate him upon his Christmas joy. Tomorrow I will call and see how you get on together."

CHAPTER X.

It was not much earlier when the two lovers, who had likewise separated themselves from the rest, arrived before Julie's house. They had taken a roundabout way,

for Jansen, who was only too happy to have his beautiful sweetheart on his arm, and to be alone with her at last, would have liked to wander about for hours. The night-air quickened all his senses, and, in the pale light of the snow and the lamps, the face at his side appeared to him enchantingly beautiful. But he spoke little, just as all the evening he had been the quietest of the party. And she understood him well enough to know that he did not speak to her simply because he never ceased to think of her. Sometimes he would draw her closer to him, and touch his lips to her cool, soft cheek, in the dark shadow of the houses or in the centre of a deserted square. Then he would speak some tender word to her, only to lapse into silence again the next moment.

When at last they arrived at the gate before her house, she stood still and drew the door-key from her pocket.

"We are really here already!" she said. "What a pity! I could walk for hours. It seems to me as if time stood still when I am hanging on your arm. But I must relieve my old Erich, who is sitting up until I come. Good-night, dearest!"

"Here?" he asked, painfully surprised—"here, in the cold street? It is warm in your rooms."

"And for that very reason," she said, softly, "we should find it so much the harder to part."

"Julie!" he cried, passionately clasping her to his breast, "*must* we part? Can you send me away, when we have not been able to say a confidential word to one another all this evening? If you but knew how I felt—"

She gently withdrew from his embrace. "Dearest," she whispered, "I know only too well. Do you suppose it costs me no struggle to have more sense than you, you

wild man? To still make myself out a girl without a heart, while all the while I can feel the poor disobedient thing beating only too wildly? Oh, my darling, if you and I were only alone in the world—”

“Who is there besides ourselves who can separate us from one another?” he cried, hotly.

She laid her soft hand entreatingly upon his mouth. There were some people passing who stopped to listen to his loud voice. “Be quiet, dearest!” she whispered. “Be good, be gentle, be patient for just a little while longer; and think, too, of my own feeling. Have you forgotten that I have determined to be a good mother to our little Frances? I always want to be able to look her in the eyes, and on our marriage-day, too, when I wear the bridal-wreath that I have honorably deserved. The happiness of belonging to you is so great that it may well be worth a time of probation. And now good-night, until to-morrow, and don’t be angry with me. Some time you will thank me for having to-day made myself out stronger—than I really am.”

With these words she threw her arms tightly round his neck, and gave him a long and loving kiss. Then she hastily escaped, opened the gate, and vanished down the dark garden-walk that led to the house-door. He waited to see the light appear in her window; he could not feel reconciled to parting from her in this way. But she knew that it would only be the harder for him to tear himself away if he should see a light in her window. With throbbing pulse and burning cheeks she entered the dark room, refusing to take the lamp which the old servant had in readiness. So she undressed herself by the faint light that penetrated through the blinds, and hastily

sought her bed, to lie a long time sleepless, thinking of all the happiness that was in store for her.

Nor did Rosenbusch make any great haste to take his lady home. They were both in a very merry mood, and he especially made so many brilliant jokes that he kept her laughing continually. It was by sheer oversight that they suddenly found themselves standing at last before her house and Angelica expressed her surprise that the way had been so short. It was so refreshing to be out in the cold winter night, after all the punch and laughter.

A droschky drove slowly past. Rosenbusch proposed that they should take a drive to the Nymphenburg. But she would not hear of such a thing, but advised him to go home like a respectable person, and not to seek companions in some wine-house and spend the night with them in drinking ; he had more in his head already than was good for him. But when she did not succeed in getting the house-door unlocked, she had to put up with his remark that her hand did not seem to be a very steady one either. "A man must guide her steps," he sang from the "Zauberflöte," as he took the key from her and opened the door with a smart wrench. "It was very true," she said, "she did not know how to manage latch-keys as well as certain night-birds. But now, many thanks and good-night !"

With these words she attempted to step into the house ; but he, in his merry, audacious mood, could not restrain himself from quickly seizing her round the waist and giving the good girl, who looked positively pretty with her hood and her red cheeks, a sounding kiss upon the lips. But this was carrying the joke too far, in her opinion.

"Herr von Rosebud," she said, in her coldest tone, "you have drunk more than is good for you, and are not entirely responsible for what you do. For that reason I can't be so severe upon your forgetfulness of all propriety as I otherwise should be. I will merely remark to you that my name is not Nanny, and that I wish you a very good-evening."

She made him a formal courtesy, and attempted to slip quickly past him. But he held her fast by her cloak and said, in a droll, pathetic tone :

"You wrong me greatly, Angelica. Truly, I have such a devilish respect for you, I honor you so boundlessly as the model of all womanly virtues, that I would rather eat my head than forget what I owe to you. But will you have the goodness to remember that we have sleighing now ? and although we two have merely slid here on foot, still I thought myself entitled, as your true knight, to take this liberty. If this was an error, can you find it in your heart to condemn me for it to the eternal punishment of your direful wrath ?"

She could not help laughing at the crushed and penitential mien, which the cunning rascal knew so well how to assume.

"Go !" she said, in her old tone again. "On Christmas night the Saviour came into the world to suffer for all sinners. And, perhaps, you may be forgiven too."

"I thank you," he responded, very quietly. "And in token thereof, dear fellow-Christian, seal your solemn forgiveness, in the sight of this starry heaven, with a voluntary, sisterly kiss. No, you must not refuse me this, unless you want me to pass a sleepless night. You are no Philistine, dearest Angelica."

"I wish I were one," she sighed. But then she kindly and without further resistance offered him her red lips, and said, once more : "Good - night, my dear Rosenbusch !" and the house-door closed between them.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

THE new year had come, but it brought little that was new.

One day, about the middle of January, when a light snow was falling in large flakes, the carriage of the old countess had been standing for more than an hour before the hotel in which Irene was stopping with her uncle. The coachman, buried in his high-shouldered bearskin coat, had fallen into a doze, and the horses hung their heads and meekly suffered themselves to be covered with the falling snow. But it seemed as though the silent fall of the flakes would come to an end sooner than the storm of German and French phrases with which the lively old lady overwhelmed the young Fräulein, who sat absently listening to her.

Her uncle had retired into a window-niche, and was looking over an illustrated hunting-book ; now and then he threw in a word, a question about this or that acquaintance, which immediately gave the old countess an opportunity to begin a new chapter of her town-gossip.

When, in the midst of this, the servant announced the arrival of the lieutenant, Irene could not suppress a glad "Ah !" This time she found his riding-boots, stiff with snow, and his shabby old winter overcoat, in which he

was muffled up to the eyes, by no means so objectionable as usual, but welcomed him as a friend in need, and, smiling gratefully, gave him her hand, which he pressed tightly between his rough buckskin gloves.

But for all that she was disappointed in her hope, for he silently threw himself into a chair, stretched out his legs and beat time with his riding-whip on his high boots, while the old lady, taking up the lost thread of her discourse again, began to spin on as zealously as ever.

Her conversation dealt for the most part with the festi-
val calendar of the great world, with receptions, *soirées*, routs, and the amateur theatricals that had been given by the French ambassador. Then the question whether there was a prospect of any court balls, and how many there would be, was discussed at length, with great vigor, and with many references to former times, when the good lady was a reigning belle.

All at once it seemed to occur to her that she had the conversation entirely to herself.

"*Mais savez-vous, mon cher Schnetz,*" she said, turning to him, "*que vous avez une mine à faire peur ? Je ne parle pas de votre toilette*—in that respect you have never been very indulgent toward us. But all the time I am trying to initiate our dear Irene into the programme of her winter pleasures—for we can never think of letting her travel off into that land of cholera and brigands, where they are threatening to cut the throat of our religion and of the holy Father—you sit there like Hippocrates—*le dieu du silence ; et on voit bien, que vous vous moquez intérieurement de tous ces plaisirs innocents.* Of course, in regard to dancing, the gentlemen now-a-days are quite *blasé*. But although you yourself can no longer take any pleasure in the joys of the carnival—"

"You are greatly mistaken, my dear countess," interrupted Schnetz, seriously. "I am so far from being indifferent to the pleasures of dancing that I actually propose to dance all night long, four days from to-day, provided I can find a partner who will dare to trust herself with such a dancing bear."

"Four days from to-day? *Vous plaisantez, mon ami.* Where is there going to be a ball four days from to-day?"

"Not in the higher spheres, gracious lady, but still a very excellent and respectable ball; moreover, in masks, which fact would in itself make it worth attending. The truth is," he said, addressing himself to Irene, "on Saturday we propose to open the carnival in our 'Paradise,' about which I have already told you. You undoubtedly remember that young baron, who took our boat in tow that day on the lake, and who afterward had the difficulty with that murderous scoundrel? He is going away to America—no one knows exactly why; and, as we all like him, we are anxious to give him a formal farewell *fête*. For in all the five points of the globe he will never see again such a masquerade as we can make for him!"

A short pause followed these words. Irene had suddenly grown as pale as death; it seemed to her as if she could not breathe; her uncle laid aside his hunter's album, and rose, contriving, as he did so, to secretly step on Schnetz's toe—the latter was apparently occupied in the most innocent manner, with his heavy silver watch-chain, from which were suspended a boar's tooth, a few trinkets, and a large seal ring.

"*Comment?*" said the old lady. "He is going off to America? *C'est drôle*—and at this time of year—*au cœur de l'hiver!* And I have been meaning to ask you,

my dear Schnetz, to bring this young man to see me—he certainly looks as if he might be a magnificent dancer, and from his birth and education he could not but prefer the balls in society to any dancing parties that your artist friends might give.”

“That is a question, countess,” remarked Schnetz, dryly, as he rubbed his disfigured ear; “or, rather, knowing the man as I do, it is not a question at all. My friend’s taste is altogether too unprejudiced for him to consult the peerage to find out whether he may amuse himself or not, or to judge by a merry dancer’s eyes whether she is worth having for a partner. He has had sufficient experience of what you are pleased to call society to enable him to turn his back upon it without regret. He now seeks society where he can find it; and, if it belongs to the set you consider disreputable, it is good enough for him on carnival eve, if for no other reason than because the so-called ‘good society’ is only called so because, as a well-known Weimar councilor once remarked, ‘it never yet afforded material for even the smallest poem.’”

“*Toujours le même frondeur !*” laughed the old lady. “*Mais on doit pourtant observer les convenances ;* I mean, even if your friend does sometimes condescend to enter this *Bohème*, as you yourself do—”

Schnetz immediately cleared his throat loudly. “As to the condescension,” he said, with emphasis, “there can be so little talk of that in the present case, that I can assure you that if the most accomplished courtiers in your exclusive society should present themselves for admission to this Paradise, they would be blackballed, with but very few exceptions. This will give you an idea of what the gentleman are like. As for our female guests—

though they might not always find favor in the eyes of delicate ladies—I will do them the justice to say that they always behave themselves with propriety while they are with us, and that they have a very good idea of what is expected of them on such occasions. If this were not the case, do you think I would dare to invite our honored Fräulein to this masked ball? to do which, by the way, was the occasion of my present visit.”

“Irene? Well, I must confess, Schnetz—*c’est l’idée la plus extravagante que vous ayez jamais eue. Irene, qu’en dites-vous, ma chère enfant? Mais c’est une idée—*

“It is our rule,” said Schnetz, turning to Irene, without paying the slightest heed to this interruption, “to allow each member to bring a lady with him, no matter whether she is known to the others or not. Her cavalier is held responsible by the society for her behaving herself with propriety. And up to the present time all have shown so much tact in their choice, that nothing like a scandal has ever occurred. Of course these good children are of all degrees of education and origin, respectable burghers’ daughters, actresses belonging to the smaller theatres, and very likely you will find a little seamstress or milliner among them, for whose unswerving principles I should hardly like to answer. But all these inequalities disappear in the masquerade, and one sees nothing but round, pretty faces, which their artist friends try to set off as charmingly as possible. To have taken part in such a thing, my dear Fräulein, will be an experience for you which you will not forget as quickly as you do the artificial routs of our aristocratic friends, that pass without mirth or comfort, and of which one is the exact counterpart of all the rest.

“Then, besides,” he continued, as Irene gave no sign

either of assent or dissent, "you needn't stand on any ceremony at all. If you should not feel at home among us Bohemians, you can regard the matter as you would a play, whose end we do not stop to see if it bores or depresses us. I need only add that the young lady to whom Jansen is secretly engaged is coming, as well as our honest friend Angelica, so that you will not lack a guard of honor. Now, do help me persuade the Fräulein, my dear countess. I am well enough acquainted with her uncle, to know that he will have nothing to say against it."

"I help you, you godless tempter of youth?" cried the old lady, wavering between sincere anger and a desire to laugh. "*Mais décidément vous tournez à la folie, mon cher Schnetz!* Have you forgotten that I fill the place of a spiritual mother, *pour ainsi dire*, to our Irene? that I feel myself responsible for all the impressions and experiences she may encounter in our Munich? And you ask me to persuade her to enter a society to which women *de la plus basse extraction*, shop-girls, grisettes and models belong—a society, in a word, which is of a thoroughly *mauvais genre*, no matter how much you bad men may prefer it to ours?"

While she was pouring forth this hasty speech, a singular play of anger, pity, and withering scorn came and went upon Schnetz's face. At length the old lady having come to an end, and making as though she would draw Irene to her arms, as if she were a little chicken who sought protection from the claws of a hawk, the lieutenant slowly rose, planted himself before the sofa, folded his arms over his chest and said, bringing out each word with a certain dry satisfaction :

"You are too old, my good countess, and moreover

too thoroughly petrified by the atmosphere of courts, for me to venture to hope that you will change, in any way, your ideas about men and things. But I must respectfully request you not to make use of the expression *mauvais genre* in connection with any society to which I permit myself the honor of inviting Fräulein Irene. It is opposed to my principles to introduce young ladies whom I esteem into any circle where they could be insulted by anything immoral or vulgar. Upon this point, I hold even more exclusive views than you, in spite of your duties as spiritual mother. In the days when I was still a frequenter of 'society,' which is undoubtedly neither better nor worse here than it is in other capitals, I often overheard ballroom-talk which would not have been excused in our Paradise, even by the license allowed to those who wear masks—though we can scarcely be called prudish. It is true the conversation was veiled in smooth French and still smoother double meanings, which undoubtedly accounts for its being considered *bon genre*. So much for mere *words*. And when we come to consider the deeds of this *haute extraction* from a moral point of view—why, you yourself have kept a record long enough to know that one may be very well versed in the manners of a court, and may yet, as far as looseness of principles is concerned, rival many a grisette, or, for that matter, many a model; and that blue blood is quite as apt to run away with the weaker sex as red. Those gentlemen, especially—to whom you would not hesitate to trust Fräulein Irene for an entire cotillion—may I be allowed to remind you of certain stories, in connection with some of your own partners? About Baron X., for instance, who—" and he bent down over the old lady, and whispered for some time in her ear, notwithstanding the comi-

cal struggles she made to protect herself from the auricular confession thus forced upon her.

"*Mais vous êtes affreux,*" she cried out at length and struck at him with her handkerchief, very much in the same way that one tries to rid one's self of a swarm of importunate gnats.

"I beg a thousand pardons," growled Schnetz, again addressing himself to Irene. "*C'est contre la bienséance, de chuchoter en société*—you see I haven't quite forgotten my catechism of good-breeding even yet, though I do sometimes sin against it. I merely wished to convince the countess that the '*Bohème*' from which I have chosen my friends, does indeed consist of men, and not of angels, but that it would be impossible for me to introduce the Fräulein to any one there, from whom the history of morals and civilization in this city could learn as much as it could from certain members of the best circles."

The old countess hastily rose. Her face had grown very red, her nostrils quivered. She gave a slight cough, and then said, turning with a motherly smile to Irene, who was helping her on with her furs.

"*Ce cher Schnetz, il a toujours le petit mot pour rire. Well, ma mignonne, faites ce que vous voudrez. Je m'en lave les mains. Adieu, Baron! À tantôt! Adieu, Schnetz, you renegade, you horrid wretch! I see it is true what the world says of you, and what I have always disputed, that you have the most malicious tongue in the whole city.*"

She gave him as she passed a little tap, intended to be light and coquettish, but really delivered so sharply that the recipient could easily see how glad the same hand would have been to give him a more forcible lesson—if it had only been good *ton*.

CHAPTER II.

SHE had scarcely left the room, accompanied by Irene, when the baron stepped up to Schnetz.

"Well, I must confess," he cried, "you are not a cheerful man to pick bones with! For Heaven's sake, tell me, *mon vieux*, what devil possesses you to talk in this reckless way to that old court mummy?"

Schnetz looked him coolly in the face, and once more began to rub his mutilated ear.

"Do you really think she understood me?"

"Understood you? *Que diable!* You certainly left nothing to be desired on the score of plainness. I must say though, my good friend, now that we are quite alone again, that, excellent as I find your plan of bringing the two offended lovers together under cover of the freedom of a masquerade, I really can't approve of the way in which you have gone to work. For no matter how much my niece may be shaken in her whim by the prospect of America, or how thankful she may be at heart for every chance that is given her to capture her roving bird again—still, just think how difficult you have made the matter for her, by bringing up this question of the ball before that old woman! I ought to have been kept out of the game too. Now, if she asks me on my conscience as uncle and guardian——."

"On your conscience? On *which*, if I may ask? On your conscience as a baron or as a man?"

"H'm! I should imagine that two old tent companions, such as we are, would agree pretty well as to the matter itself. But you must admit that much, which might

seem quite innocent to me as a bachelor, could hardly meet my approval as a guardian, in my official capacity, so to speak. And more than this, it seems to me that there really are two different moral standpoints for men and women, and what is right for the one is not always proper for the other."

"There you hit it exactly!" cried Schnetz, flying into a rage, and throwing his whip down on the table. "That is why we never come across a single sprig of fresh verdure in our social relations! that is why we must eternally carry about lies, narrow-hearted makeshifts, and mean reservations, all because we adopt a double standard of weights and measures, and regard a damned shrug of the shoulders as an excellent preventive for all the cancers of society! Neither of the two sexes, when they are together, dares express itself openly, neither says all that it thinks, each thinks to fool the other with its tricks and quibbles, while both know very well what they are about, and ought by good rights to laugh in each other's faces over these miserable and perfectly fruitless sham fights. And because this whole farce is so cursedly insipid, and this high tone of high society makes the women gape as well as the men, therefore both sides struggle all the more eagerly to indemnify themselves for the boredom they have suffered, each in his own way, in clubs or worse places, or under four eyes, where one throws aside all masks and strait-lacing. Honest old Sir John was quite right—'A plague of all cowards, say I'—And this modern world of ours will never grow healthy again until the two sexes become tired of this childish mummery and meet each other half-way in an honest endeavor to give truth a trial, without prudery and without coarseness!"

He raved on in this fashion for some time longer, without giving the baron a chance to get in a syllable. Not until his breath had given out, and he had seized upon his hat, did the other venture to offer a meek reply.

"All very good and fine, my dear friend, all admitted in theory. But *in praxi*—since the world has not yet become entirely sensible—won't it be necessary to respect the prejudices of a stupid majority for a while longer? Can our young lady—now that this old chatterer knows about it—go, without any further consideration, to your paradisaical festival, where she is sure to meet dubious daughters of Eve? where it is possible that the girl who was running after our Felix, the little, red-haired waiter-girl, may, God knows in what costume, stir up another scene of murder and manslaughter?"

Schnetz had remained standing with his hand on the door. As the baron said these words he let it go again, and stared at the excited speaker for a while; then he laughed bitterly, and stepped back into the room once more.

"This waiter-girl?" said he, laying his hand on the baron's shoulder. "Well, of all the games the devil ever played! Old friend, do you know who this waiter-girl is, who nursed this youngster Felix so faithfully, while others looked on from a distance? This waiter-girl, this child of the people, who would not be fitting company for a young baroness? Well, then, she is your own daughter, baron, and first cousin of your high-born niece!"—

The baron stepped back a step or two. "*Trève de plaisanteries, mon cher!*" he stammered, trying to laugh. "What sort of a romance is this you are trying to palm off on me! I—I am—ha, ha, ha! A delightful farce!"

"I congratulate you and your good child upon the cheerful mood in which this un hoped-for discovery finds you," remarked Schnetz, dryly. "To be sure, the affair is by no means so tragic as it would have been, were the mother still living. This poor deserted"—here he stepped close up to the baron, who stood as if petrified, and pronounced her name—"this sacrifice to our double code of morals has been dead for a year ; nor has the child any suspicion that her dear papa is leading a jolly bachelor's life in the same city with her."

The baron sank upon the sofa ; his arms hung at his sides ; the only sign of life that he gave was in his little, restless eyes, that wandered about anxiously and unsteadily, without seeming to rest on anything. In the mean while Schnetz strode up and down with noiseless tread, apparently waiting to see whether his friend, who had received so severe a shock, stood in any need of his help or his advice. Ten minutes passed, and neither of them had uttered a word more.

"You will permit me to light a cigarette," growled Schnetz at length, between his teeth ; "the lady of the house seems to have no intention of showing herself again—"

At this moment the door of the neighboring room opened, and Irene entered, paler than before, and with such an agitated, sad expression upon her young face, that Schnetz gazed upon her with a feeling of remorse.

No sooner had the door begun to creak than her uncle sprang up, hastily pressed his friend's hand, and whispered to him that he must speak with him about this matter at all hazards ; then he rushed out without a glance at his ward.

The extraordinary haste with which he retreated did

not seem to strike Irene as at all strange. She advanced quickly to the window at which Schnetz was standing, and said :

“Were you really in earnest about your invitation to the masquerade ?”

He assured her that it would afford him the greatest pleasure to accompany her ; all the more because, after what had been said on the subject, he should consider it not only as a proof of her confidence in him, but even as a token of true friendship and esteem, if she would not refuse to accept his invitation.

She went on to ask whether she would be allowed to come in a plain domino and mask—talking all the time with a half-absent expression.

He replied that only masks in costume would be admitted. As she considered four days to be too short a time for getting ready a complete costume, he proposed to her that, since she expressed herself as willing to be admitted to Bohemia, she should come as a gypsy. He offered to provide her, through his artist friends, with beautiful and genuine materials. It would be very easy for her to get plenty of bright coral and pearl ornaments and strings of coins with which to ornament her hair ; and he would take her to some stores where such things could be bought. This costume, he concluded, would have the double advantage of being easily gotten up with a few feathers and scraps, and of permitting the wearer—since masks for the face were prohibited—to dye her skin, to blacken her eyebrows, and to make herself as unlike herself as possible. “I, myself, always appear as a Spaniard, as the Knight of the Rueful Countenance, or as Duke Alba. If I could have a Gitana upon my arm, I should be quite in character, and should create a sensation for the

first time ; for they are not used to seeing me appear with a beautiful partner."

As he said this he kissed the young lady's hand, quite in the courtly Spanish manner, and made as though he would take leave. But she still held him tightly.

"Will—that girl come, too?" she said, hesitatingly.

"What girl, Fräulein?"

She looked steadily before her. "I heard all!" she said, with a slight tremor in her voice. "The walls in this hotel are so thin that one cannot help overhearing, in spite of one's self, all that is being said in the next room. Oh, tell me candidly ; is it really true?"

"Unquestionably. My dear young lady, if you were a little better acquainted with the society which surrounds you, you would find this case by no means an extraordinary one. Besides, the circumstances are favorable enough this time. Her own grandfather has already taken his long-lost granddaughter in charge ; so jealously, indeed, that he would not give her up to her father, even if the latter wished it ; and the girl herself is good and respectable. She is—"

"I know her," interrupted Irene, blushing. "And yet—it would agitate me greatly if I should chance to meet her at the ball. There are all sorts of—I will tell you some other time, if you feel interested."

She suddenly broke off, and he saw that she was struggling with her tears.

"You may make your mind easy, my dear Fräulein," said he, taking up his hat and whip. "The poor child will not be present. She is in such a strange mood since she went to live with her grandfather, and so carefully avoids meeting any one who knew her under former circumstances, that all the power in the world could not in-

duce her to visit our Paradise. But seriously, now—*á Dios*, as we Spaniards say. Be of good courage; I believe everything will turn out better than we dream of now.”

He gave the hand of the speechless girl a hearty pressure, and left her alone with her aching heart, which found that it could do nothing wiser than relieve itself by a flood of tears.

CHAPTER III.

It so happened that, in another room of the same house, and at almost exactly the same hour, the pleasures of the masquerade in Paradise formed the subject of conversation.

For some weeks past Rosenbusch had intended to make inquiries concerning the health of his Russian patroness, who, as he knew, was confined to her room by a slight injury to her foot. He felt it incumbent on him to show himself a young man who respected the laws of politeness and society, although he was a disciple of the liberal arts.

He found the countess in her bedroom, which smelled of Russian leather and cigarettes. A samovar and an empty champagne bottle stood on the table by the bed, and all kinds of note-books, portfolios, French books, and photographs lay about upon the chairs. Nelida reclined upon the bed, robed in a long silk dressing-gown, with a black point-lace veil thrown nun-fashion over her dark hair. She looked paler than in the summer, and, as she extended her white hand to the painter with a gracious smile, he was forced to admit to himself that she

perfectly understood the art of making as much capital as possible out of her suffering condition, and of appearing still more interesting in her enforced quiet than in her usual activity.

She was not alone. The retired singer, who appeared to be regularly installed as her companion, and who was at the moment engaged in the back part of the room in poking the fire in the grate, had been sitting in the chair which was now offered to Rosenbusch.

Opposite the bed, in a low arm-chair, sat a younger lady, whom Rosenbusch had not seen before, and who immediately attracted his artistic eye. Was she a married woman or a girl? The countess did not mention her name. But, although the soft fullness of her figure seemed rather to indicate the mature woman, the features of the charming face and the glance of the dark-blue eyes had a soft and dreamy expression that was altogether maidenly. Then, too, she looked very girlish when, chancing to look up suddenly from the embroidery on which she was engaged, she gazed with innocent wonder straight into the face of the speaker, then opened her lips in a laugh which displayed two rows of the most beautiful little teeth, and the next instant bent down her head again as if in confusion, until her thick brown hair fell low over her forehead.

Rosenbusch, who was smitten at once, would very gladly have drawn a little nearer to this enchanting stranger. But the countess took complete possession of him, making him give her a circumstantial account of his doings and actions, and expressing an unusual interest in the "Battle of Lützen," which was now finished. As she was a perfect mistress of the art of making every one believe that his particular plans and aims were of more

importance to her than anything else, Rosenbusch did not remark, in the joy of his heart, that, in spite of her interest in him, she yawned several times, but went on talking about anything that came into his head—about his labors, his ideas of art, his friends, and finally about the masked ball in Paradise. He related, among other things, that Jansen would appear in a genuine Venetian costume, and his betrothed in a corresponding one, which was to be exactly copied from a portrait by Paris Bordone, in red velvet with a little gold embroidery, and which would go marvelously well with her pale complexion and the dull-gold color of her hair.

While he was giving this description the beautiful stranger let her embroidery fall in her lap, and fixed her eyes upon the speaker with the curious expression of a child listening to a fairy tale.

“Such a costume would be exceedingly becoming to you also, madame,” stammered the painter, who now for the first time addressed a direct remark to the unknown person.

She laughed absently, sighed, but said nothing.

Nelida exchanged a quick glance with her, and then asked, as if to give the conversation another turn, what costume Rosenbusch had chosen for himself. The truth was, he candidly replied, his means did not permit him to make any very great display; he should put himself into a Capuchin's cowl, which would go exceedingly well with his beard, and, since he was always expected on such occasions to deliver some poetical effusion, he hoped this time to get out of the affair with a regular Capuchin sermon.

“No doubt you will compose a very talented and witty one,” said the countess. “But wouldn't this cos-

tume be exceedingly warm and uncomfortable if worn long; and will it be easy for you to find a dress for your partner that will match yours?"

"My dear countess," sighed Rosenbusch, "I am unfortunately in a position to bear the vow of celibacy much more easily than most of the brothers of my order. The only partner in whom I could take any interest— But I won't bore the ladies with my private affairs."

"No, no, don't say that, my dear Herr Rosenbusch. Confess everything boldly. You will find the most sympathetic appreciation here."

"Well, then, I will tell you. I had engaged a young girl for this ball, who, I am convinced, would unquestionably have borne off the prize from all but the beautiful Julie. But her parents—bigoted, narrow-minded shopkeepers—cannot be persuaded to allow the poor thing this innocent pleasure. So you will readily understand, ladies, that I would rather throw myself into the arms of celibacy than take up with the first one who comes along."

He grew red, and wiped his forehead with his gloved right hand.

Nelida again exchanged a look with the stranger. The singer, too, now that she felt relieved from the fear of being recognized by Rosenbusch, had stepped up to the foot of the bed, and seemed to follow the conversation with especial interest.

"Perhaps," said the countess, smiling—"perhaps I may be able to provide you with a substitute, who will in some degree make good your loss. A moment before you came in we were saying how cruel it was of Fate to keep me here in my room at the very time of the carnival! It is true my dancing days are past. But my dear

friend here, Madame—Madame von St.-Aubain, a good German, by-the-way, in spite of her name— Only think, my principal object in inviting her to see me at this time was in order that I might show her our Munich carnival, and now she is forced to sit here at the side of my bed and practise the Christian virtues of patience and charity ! To be sure, if she could only find a knight to whom I dared trust her with a good conscience—”

“ O countess ! ” interrupted Rosenbusch, springing up enthusiastically, “ are you really in earnest ? Madame would not scorn to—”

“ You are very good, sir,” lisped the stranger, in a soft, pleasing voice, which completed the conquest of our friend’s heart. “ It is true that it is my greatest wish to catch a stolen glimpse of the life that goes on in this artists’ world, about whose festivals I have heard so much. But I am too timid to venture into a perfectly strange circle, even under the most chivalrous protection, when, as you say, masks for the face are prohibited.”

“ I understand you perfectly, madame ! ” cried Rosenbusch, enthusiastically. “ It is the custom to attribute such wild things to us artists that a lady belonging to high society might well be terrified by them. But you shall see yourself that we are better than our reputation. Allow me to make a proposal. I will provide you with a monk’s dress similar to my own. In order to remain unrecognized you have only to pull the cowl over your head ; and if, in addition to this, you should fasten on some white eyebrows and a beard of the same color, you could observe all that was going on as securely as if you were behind a curtain or in a dark theatre-box, without any one having a suspicion how much grace and beauty—excuse these bold compliments—is hidden behind this

plain disguise. The only possible suspicion that could arise would be that I led on my arm that young girl—that obedient daughter of cruel parents, who had secretly managed to escape from her cage.”

The stranger stood up, approached the bed, and, bending over the countess, exchanged a few low words with her. In motion she appeared even more attractive than in repose. Rosenbusch, who was completely carried away, could not take his eye from this beautiful yet delicate figure, and awaited with beating heart the result of the secret consultation.

At last she turned to him again, fixed her soft eyes on his face, as if she wanted to convince herself once more that she might put confidence in him, and then said :

“I will really venture to do it, sir, but only under two conditions : that you will not betray to any of your friends, even by a syllable, that the mask at your side is a stranger, and not the person for whom they will all take her ; and that, further, you will take me out of the company and see me to my carriage as soon as I ask you to. You need not fear,” she continued, slyly smiling, “that I will trouble you long. But I really can’t resist the desire to see so many celebrated artists together, to admire their costumes and the beautiful women they will bring with them. The best way will be for you to go without me, and when the festivities are well under way—say about eleven o’clock—I will be in the carriage at the garden-gate, where you will be so good as to meet me. Do you agree to this, and will you give me your word that you will strictly adhere to these conditions ?”

Rosenbusch, before whose fancy very different visions of splendor were floating, and who was secretly convinced that he would succeed in persuading the beautiful stran-

ger to lay aside her disguise and shine with him in Paradise the moment the festive spirit of the ball seized upon her, very wisely refrained from making any objections to this plan, and solemnly promised everything that was asked of him. He agreed to bring the costume and all the other requisites to the hotel on the day before the festival, for the countess insisted upon dressing her friend in the monk's cowl with her own hands; and then he took leave in no slight state of excitement over his unexpected good fortune.

On the stairs he suddenly recollected Stephanopulos, and his relation to the Russian lady. For a moment it struck him as rather strange that the countess, since she seemed so anxious to introduce her friend to Paradise, had not made use of this cavalier, inasmuch as she personally could not avail herself of his escort.

"Perhaps," thought he, complacently stroking his beard, "she is jealous in regard to this young sinner and Don Juan, and doesn't care about trusting this charming woman to his charge. It is possible also that the lady herself may have expressed an aversion for this Greek adventurer. At all events, I seem to be more agreeable to her. A confoundedly charming little woman! I wonder where her husband keeps himself? or possibly she is a widow. If that were the case—"

He did not finish the sentence, even in his thoughts, for some one came down the steps behind him, and he immediately recognized the old baron whom he had seen out at Rossel's villa. But what had happened to the merry old gentleman that made him answer the artist's greeting so mechanically, and pass him, as he stood waiting on the stairs, with a wild look, as if he had been an utter stranger?

Rosenbusch followed him, shaking his head. "What devilish short memories these aristocrats have!" he growled. "If this Madame von St.-Aubain is made of the same stuff, I confess I should have a jollier time with Nanny. However, it can't be helped; that is one of the disadvantages of moving in the highest circles. In Rome one must do as the Romans do."

He threw his cloak in picturesque folds about his historical velvet jacket, and stepped forth into the snow with the joyful mien of a conqueror. His only sorrow was that he couldn't go at once to Angelica and tell her what a brilliant conquest he had made.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG all the friends, Felix was the only one who looked forward to the ball not only without impatience, but even with a secret aversion. He was in no mood for masquerading; and, if he had not been afraid of giving offense to the good companions who were desirous of paying him this last honor, he would have been up and away long before this. He gave out that it was his fixed intention to leave on the day after the ball, and answered all objection in regard to the season, which made a sea-voyage impossible, by saying that he had important business matters to look after in his native place, the sale of his estates, and the making out of certain papers that it would be necessary for him to take with him across the ocean.

Jansen alone knew the real reason of his hasty flight. Daily intercourse with his old friend, and the confidential

understanding that had once more sprung up between them, was all that lightened for Felix the painful burden of these last days. It is true Jansen had never been able to bring himself to initiate Felix into the history of his unhappy marriage as thoroughly as he had Julie. That he had once thrown himself away on an unworthy woman, and that he was now doing all in his power to effect a dissolution of the hated bond, but without success, since he had no legal proofs of her guilt, and she herself obstinately refused to give the child up to him—all this they had discussed one night over a bottle of wine, and had finally consoled themselves with the thought that the land across the ocean might eventually prove a place of refuge for Jansen also. Felix laughingly suggested that they should undertake a mission, and preach the gospel of high art to the redskins ; and they had discussed the prospect of winning over some American Cræsus, and, by some colossal work, suddenly attracting the eyes of the whole world upon them.

Then they might found an art society in the backwoods, on a somewhat different scale from that to which people were accustomed in Germany, and each member should receive as an initiation present a cast of the group of Adam and Eve.

So they went on building castles in the air in the midst of the dark clouds that overhung their sky ; and even Julie joined gladly in this cheerful tone, though her own heart was very heavy.

But, as the day of parting drew nearer and nearer, Felix's mood became steadily more depressed and wretched. Schnetz was almost the only one of his friends whom he cared to see ; and he expended all his eloquence in trying to persuade him to follow his example and shake the dust

of the Old World from his feet. Why should he lie here and grow rusty? why should he, in his best years, voluntarily withdraw himself from life and play the valetudinarian before his time? On the other side of the water, abilities like his would not be allowed to lie idle, his good wife would renew her youth again, and he might safely trust to the Yankees to provide him with plenty of material for the exercise of his Thersites-like black art during his leisure moments. To all this Schnetz replied by silently and thoughtfully rubbing his ear, without, however, giving any reason to believe that he absolutely declined the proposal. Indeed, he seemed to be bent upon keeping the lonely and dejected youngster in as good spirits as possible, and was especially active in trying to laugh away Felix's distaste for the ball, as an attack of sentimentality that a future American ought not to yield to. If it was a bother for him to look after a costume, he would be very glad to lend him a helping hand.

Felix thanked him for his good-will. He had, among the various relics of his travels, the complete suit of a Spanish maje, which he had brought with him from Mexico. The velvet jacket bordered with silver, the knee-breeches and the gay silk stockings, the red net for the hair, and whatever else belonged to the complete equipment of a Spanish dandy, became him excellently; and though in his present mood he had no thoughts of attempting any conquests, he was, nevertheless, glad that he would be able to show himself to his artist friends in a genuine national costume, and not in any patched-up frippery.

But, when the night of the ball arrived, it was long before he could make up his mind to put on this gay dress. He had packed his luggage, paid his landlady, and made

all his preparations for departure. When at last he stood alone before his glass in his empty room, surrounded only by his trunks, and proceeded to fasten the net in his hair, he could not help bursting out into a loud laugh, in spite of his melancholy mood, at the absurdity of his dancing a fandango on the eve of launching himself into the uncertain future of a life beyond the sea. The sound of his voice roused old Homo, who never left him now, from his usual half-slumberous state. The sober animal started, for a moment, with an almost disapproving air at the internal and external transformation that had come over Felix ; then he rose slowly from his place near the stove, walked up to his master, and rubbed his broad nose against his hand.

"So even you are amazed, old boy," cried Felix, caressing his faithful companion, "at my merry spirits? Come, you shall experience a still greater miracle. I will take you with me ; you are the only one of your race on whom the gates of Paradise are not shut."

He took up a little black wood guitar, which properly belonged to his costume, and fastened it with red ribbons on the shaggy back of the dog, who patiently submitted to the process. Then he called his landlady, cautioned her not to let him sleep too late the next morning, as he must take the first train, ordered a carriage, and rolled away, through the mild winter's night, to the English Garden, over the soft snow that had already begun to thaw in the warm wind.

He had to pass by Irene's hotel, and he looked up at her dark windows, and felt surprised that this parting look brought no tears to his eyes. Indeed he felt as if he were one who had bidden farewell to life ; and only he who lives can sympathize. The dog slept patiently at

his feet. When the carriage jolted over a stone, the strings of the guitar sounded, and the sleeping animal growled wonderingly in his dreams.

It was on the stroke of nine when the carriage drew up before the back entrance to the little garden of Paradise. The dance was to begin at seven, but it mattered little to Felix how much of it he missed. Not until he found himself in the vestibule was he able, by a powerful exertion, to shake off the depression of his spirits and steel himself to appear cheerful. He was aided in this resolve by the sound of the music that issued from the dancing-hall, and more especially by the aspect of Fridolin, the janitor, who, arrayed in the most ridiculous of costumes, played the part of warder, and permitted no one to enter who could not prove to his satisfaction that he was one of the invited guests. He was posted here in the character of the angel with the flaming sword, in a white, ruffled robe—with a golden girdle, two immense wings suspended from his back, a rose behind each ear, and a flaming wooden sword covered with gold-leaf in his hand. In this costume he sat behind a little table, on which stood an earthenware beer-mug, and greeted the late guest with a sly and hearty nod of his elegantly-dressed head, at the same time showing his long white teeth and bestowing a self-satisfied look upon his costume. Felix stood at his side convulsed with laughter and full of admiration at the success of the disguise.

Herr Rosenbusch had provided him with this beautiful dress, remarked the old fellow, evidently much flattered at the notice taken of him. But how handsomely the Herr Baron was dressed, and how glad he was that he had brought Homo with him! It was right that such an animal should know what carnival-time was like.

This time it was unusually merry inside there. Each member had been allowed to invite a friend, and he in his turn to bring a lady ; there were fifty or sixty present, to put it at the lowest figure. But he enjoyed himself best outside here, for the beer kept cooler, and he could take a look in from time to time, especially now when it was probable no one else would come, except a lady whom Herr Rosenbusch was still expecting.

Felix completed the paradisiacal mood of the good old man by forcing a very considerable present into his hand as a parting gift, for he was not going to visit the studio again. Then he escaped as quickly as possible from his thanks, and entered the large central hall of "Paradise," where the dancing was going on, the regular meeting-room having been transformed on this occasion into a supper-room.

It took him some time before he could separate the different groups and distinguish his friends, in the general whirl and confusion. Looking over the heads of the dancers, he saw half a dozen strange creatures mounted on a raised platform—gigantic tree-toads, a brown salamander, and a bat, who, playing upon two or three fiddles, a clarionet, a horn, and a bass-viol, composed the orchestra. Some of these amphibious beings, overpowered by the heat, had taken off their heads and fastened them on their backs, thus presenting a still more fantastic appearance by the contrast between their bearded, flushed, and very prosaic human faces and their reptile skins. This feature of the ball was also the work of the battle-painter, who, having little trouble in arranging his own costume, had been indefatigable in helping the others by deed and word. He now approached Felix, skillfully winding his way through the dancing couples, drew forth

a snuff-box and a blue-checked handkerchief from his brown cowl, and murmured several Latin sentences of welcome and blessing ; and not until he had played his rôle for some time longer did he gravely shake hands with his laughing friend, and reproach him for coming too late.

Felix had no time to excuse himself, for a tall Englishman, who was just dancing by with a blonde-haired Suabian girl, stopped suddenly, led his partner out of the dance, and advanced upon our friend—Elfinger, with Angelica. Then followed another welcome, another examination of the costumes, and much laughter and admiration. Angelica, in her pretty national costume, and standing by the side of the ridiculous caricature that Elfinger carried out with unswerving dignity, appeared to very great advantage, especially now when the excitement of dancing caused her eyes to sparkle and her cheeks to glow. Rosenbusch told them how much trouble he had had in persuading her to wear this dress, for she had obstinately persisted in coming as a Dachau peasant-girl, and making a scarecrow of her figure. She was guilty, unfortunately, of the weakness of not wishing to be conceited, which all women ought to be, according to the wise decree of Providence ; and to stand aloof in this way from an hereditary sin was really one of the worst sorts of coquetry, and should be consigned to eternal punishment by holy men like himself.

To this the good soul replied in a tone of mock anger, defended herself bravely against his ecclesiastical arrogance, and refused to listen to the sermons of any other sect but her own. She gave Felix a most hearty welcome, but with a certain sly smile, as if she knew of some particular masquerade joke that was in preparation for him ; and then took him by the hand and led him to Jansen

and Julie, who were the handsomest couple at the ball—"so far, at all events," she added, with the same mysterious expression as before.

In order to reach the two, they were obliged to work their way through the whole length of the hall, and were often delayed by the whirl of the dancers. So Felix had plenty of time to examine the company. He recognized but few of them in their costumes. A stout Arab, with a dark face and wearing a white burnoose, approached him, bowed low with his hands on his breast, and then withdrew after this dumb greeting to take possession of a chair at the lower end of the hall. It was only when he saw the way in which he comfortably settled himself in it that Felix recognized him. But just as he was on the point of going after Rossel, a young Greek, gorgeously dressed in full armor, attracted his attention. He and his partner, a beautiful girl, were dancing madly in and out among the waltzing couples, yet without creating the slightest confusion.

"Stephanopulos!" whispered Felix. "Do you know his partner?" Angelica shrugged her shoulders, and apparently preferred to leave the question unanswered. There was no lack of pretty girls, and, although they belonged to the most different social ranks, they all bore themselves with the like respectability, and, with all their freedom, with natural good taste. The young architect stepped up to say good-evening to him. He wore a becoming Flemish costume, and his companion, who was not exactly pretty, but looked sensible and modest, was dressed as a mediæval burgher's daughter, with a large coif and ruffles about the neck. Then the couple danced a graceful provincial dance to the *Ländler* that the band was playing, waltzing round and round in the same spot,

or separating in fantastic figures to approach each other again and take each other by the finger-tips.

Kohle also danced, but entirely by himself, in an exceedingly comical costume, for he represented St. Dionysius, who was accustomed to carry his decapitated head under his arm. For this purpose he had rigged up an immense cabbage-head, had painted it and hung it round with long horse-hairs, while his own head was ingeniously encircled by a huge aureole, from which there hung a golden fringe covering his face, so that, from a distance, this yellow, dazzling disk seemed to rest immediately on the neck. This figure, half ghastly, half droll, slowly swung itself about among the whirling couples, to the sound of the music, occasionally going through with a little extemporaneous buffoonery, especially with the Capuchin, who evinced a deep respect for the holy man, which he expressed by incessantly offering him his snuff-box, and by making frantic efforts to kiss the head of the martyr.

"Where is Schnetz?" asked Felix. Angelica appeared not to have heard the question; for just at this moment they arrived at the side of the hall where the windows were, and where several spectators were sitting, among them Jansen and his betrothed. "Isn't she adorable?" whispered Angelica, as she led her companion close up to the couple, who welcomed him with a joyful exclamation. Indeed, it would have been impossible to see anything more magnificent than this beautiful blonde girl, dressed in the rich folds of a dark-red velvet dress, with puffed and slashed sleeves, her beautiful neck bare, and wearing no other ornament than a delicate Venetian chain; her blonde hair, slightly curled, flowing freely over her shoulders, and set off by a few dark

flowers. It seemed to Felix, also, that he had never seen her in her real beauty before to-day, and the sweetness of her expression completed the charm. Jansen stood at her side in his dark suit, not less full of dignity and character, but looking only like a courtier standing by the side of his princess. They had neither of them danced, for he did not care for it, and she did not like to fly through the hall with any one else. They at once offered him a seat by their side, for Elfinger had once more taken possession of his Suabian maid, and began a pleasant conversation, in the course of which he could not help noticing that Julie now and then threw in some playful allusion and smiled slyly, while they were talking about the most ordinary things, just as Angelica had done before. He dropped a word or two about his approaching departure, which they did not seem to hear at all.

"Have you seen the lieutenant yet?" asked Julie, suddenly. "You ought to look him up, he has been wandering about the whole room in search of you. If I remember rightly he just went into the next room, possibly to console himself with a glass of wine for his ill success in finding you."

She smiled and laid one of her beautiful hands in that of her betrothed, while with the other she played with her black fan.

Felix rose. A restless curiosity seized upon him.

"Shan't we go into that sanctum, too?" he said. "We might sit down together at one of the little tables, and have some supper."

"Perhaps you will find better company," she replied, turning away from him. "We are a couple of tiresome old lovers, and you are a young Spanish lion who has not

yet found his lioness. Go alone ; we will follow quite soon enough."

She nodded to him pleasantly, again with a peculiar expression. He left them, shaking his head, and wound his way through the maze of dancers, to the real hall of Paradise.

CHAPTER V.

HE was just crossing the threshold when a well-known voice struck his ear, proceeding from the corner where the little wine cask lay, covered up by green oleander bushes. "*Buenas tardes, Señor Don Felix!* You come rather late, but not too late to prevent you from dancing yourself tired. I have the honor to introduce you to one of my countrywomen, a genuine Gitana. *Señorita —.*"

But Felix had long ceased to hear what he said. Before him stood—Irene.

She looked marvelously charming as she stood there, her picturesque shawls and draperies thrown loosely about her, her hair ornamented with a heavy string of corals and gold coins, large silver rings in her ears, and her eyebrows slightly darkened and joined together over her proud little nose by a delicate line ! And how her cheeks glowed at this sudden meeting with him whom, after all, she had expected, and for whose sake she had thus adorned herself ; how she cast down her eyes—and breathed hard—and tried to smile, and yet had enough to do to keep back the tears that were welling up behind her eyelashes !

For a minute or two Schnetz stood gazing with delight at this most charming of all pantomimes. Then he came to the assistance of the embarrassed couple.

"You are not altogether unacquainted with each other," said he, in his driest manner. "Señorita Gitana has to thank this noble Andalusian for saving her life from the tempestuous waves of the lake of Starnberg. He will now steer her quite as safely through the dangers of a waltz, better, most certainly, than your humble servant, whose strut might possibly strike her as rather *too* Spanish. So at it, youngster ! pluck up courage and lead the Gitanilla to the dance. After that she will show you how to read your future from your hand."

Felix recovered himself by a violent effort. "Shall we dance?" stammered he, in a scarcely audible voice, as he stepped up to Irene.

She nodded assent, and the glow on her face burned hotter, but she spoke not a word, and did not even raise her eyes. She seemed to him so utterly transformed that, even now, when he felt her hand resting on his arm, and saw her gliding along at his side, he was almost inclined to doubt again whether it could really be she. He had never seen her so yielding, so tremblingly timid, so incapable of uttering a word ; and now when he held her close and swung her in the dance, he felt more than once as if he were whirling about in one of those strangely happy dreams that change, in some curious way, the most familiar features, and lead us only into the arms of the unattainable.

Yet, all the while he felt so wonderfully happy that he was content to leave everything just as it was, and strove only to clasp this miracle as closely as possible to his breast, and to enjoy the full blessedness of this meeting as long as the dream would last. Nor did she try to resist ; indeed, she herself felt as if it were a necessity for her to press her head and glowing face close to his

shoulder, and, with half-closed eyes, to submit herself absolutely to his guidance. He could not see her face, for she held her head bent down ; but his eyes rested on her soft, brown hair, and his arm, clasped about her waist, could feel how her heart was beating. No word came from the lips of either of these two happy beings ; they did not even press one another's hands in silent sympathy, for the simple reason that both felt that there was nothing special for them to communicate—two souls had merely become one again. Nor did they take heed of those about them, who gazed with earnest interest upon this noble couple the moment they entered the room—the strangers with simple pleasure, or perhaps here and there with envy, the initiated with heart-felt joy at the triumphant success of their work.

For them there was no outside world at this moment, no friends or strangers. Besides the beating of their own hearts they felt nothing but the music ; and it seemed to them a heavenly kindness on the part of fortune, that allowed them to dance instead of forcing them to talk with one another ; that the wild and merry tones of the instruments gave them wings that lifted them above the earth, the one clasped as tightly to the other as only the dance could have made permissible before so many witnesses.

Neither of them felt the slightest fatigue, or thought of stopping to rest. Indeed, when the music finally came to an end, it seemed to them as if they had just begun ; and they stood in the middle of the hall, startled, and almost painfully still, clasped in one another's embrace as they had been in the waltz. His arm reluctantly released her figure, but he could not bring himself to give up her little slender hand. However, this did not appear to at-

tract any attention, since the other couples also were very tender with one another, and had quite enough to do in looking after their own affairs.

None of their intimate friends crossed their path. So the *majo* succeeded in leading his gypsy unchallenged into the adjoining room, from which even Schnetz had taken care to steal away.

They walked arm-in-arm, vigorously fanning themselves, down the flower-decked side of the hall, past the little tables, and stood suddenly, before they suspected it, before the buffet, which had been put up at the other end, and before which a number of waiter-girls were selling cold viands, cake, ice, and various kinds of drinks.

"Will you drink something?" he said.

It was the first word he had addressed to her. It struck him as being very stupid that he had nothing more important to say to her after such a long silence. But she did not appear to think it strange at all.

She shook her head quite seriously, drew off her glove, and took a large orange from one of the plates. "That is better after dancing," she said, in a low voice. "Come, let us eat it together."

They seated themselves at one of the small tables, and she drew off the other glove and began to peel and divide the beautiful fruit with her white little fingers. But all the while she never looked at him.

"Irene!" he whispered—"is it really possible? You are here—I—we are so unexpectedly brought together again."

"Not unexpectedly," replied she, in a still lower tone; "I knew that you would come—and that is the only reason why I came myself. Do you believe I cared anything for the dancing and the masks? Feeling as I did—"

Her voice failed her. The tears rose to her eyes. He bent down close to her, and pressed his lips to the little hands that were so busily at work.

She gave a slight start. "Oh! don't, please!" she whispered, pleadingly. "Not here, they can see us. O Felix! is it really true? You are going away—away forever?"

He did not answer for a moment, but sat absorbed in the happiness of being so near her, of listening to her voice, of feeling her warm breath as it came from her sweet lips. A reckless joy took possession of his heart, an exhilarating determination to face boldly whatever fate might have in store for him.

"Why talk of such sad things?" said he at length—for she still kept her anxious gaze fixed upon him, and seemed unable to understand the joy that lit up his face—"there will be time enough for that later on, when the ball is over and the intoxication gone, and the harsh daylight shines once more upon our lives. This is my first happy evening for many months; I thank you for giving it to me. I always knew that you loved me, and if I were only a different man from what I unfortunately am—"

"O Felix!" she pleaded, looking him full in the face. "You grieve me; it is not kind of you to shame me so, for I suffered so much before I could bring myself to admit my fault and see myself as you must have seen me for a long time past. O Felix! that you could love me in spite of all—that you could grieve for me—but wait! I have a thousand things to tell you—I must tell you them to-night—at once—but not here among all these merry people—and look there, I see some of your friends coming—only tell me how and where—"

He had no time to answer, for at this moment Jansen

approached, with Julie hanging on his arm, both with faces that made no attempt to conceal the part that they had taken in bringing about this great happiness. They refrained, however, from making any remarks that might embarrass the young couple, and simply invited them to be their *vis-à-vis* in a quadrille that was just going to begin. A pressure of the hand from Jansen was all that passed between the two friends in regard to the event. But Jansen and Julie helped to eat the oranges that were divided into sections and passed about by Irene; then, separating into couples again, they entered the hall, where the other couples had already taken their places.

However, they were by no means sorry to be left alone, and they got up a quadrille of their own in one of the corners near the windows, with Schnetz and Angelica and the Capuchin and the headless martyr for side couples.

And indeed these eight figures were well calculated to afford an inexhaustible fund of amusement for one another, and the novelty of the contrast between the two beautiful and the two grotesque couples attracted around them all those outsiders who, for one reason or another, had not taken part in the dance. Nothing could have been finer or more pleasing than when this blonde, blooming Venetian figure, in the fullness of its ripe beauty, advanced to meet this slim, foreign-looking, dazzling gypsy, and the hands of the two charming creatures met, and their eyes beamed upon one another. On the other hand, it was one of the funniest and most picturesque sights imaginable when gaunt Alba bore down with his stiff, spidery walk upon the holy martyr, while the Capuchin paid homage to the Suabian maiden in all kinds of cringing and fawning attitudes. The latter seemed to be the happiest one in the whole company at the success of the

plan, concerning which Schnetz had given her a hint some time before. She was perpetually making mistakes in the different figures of the quadrille, for she was always studying either the Spanish or the Venetian girl, and was, moreover, obliged to communicate to her partner her observations in regard to their particular fine points. She afterward found a still more attentive listener in Rossel, who had seated himself near by in the character of a spectator, holding *Homo* between his knees, and now and then sweeping with a careless hand the strings of the guitar that the faithful old animal still bore upon his back.

When the dance ended, Julie, whose heart was glowing with gladness and love, could not refrain from taking Irene to her arms and imprinting on her lips the congratulation she did not dare to put in words. Irene understood her, and blushed ; but she returned the embrace with hearty good-will, and nodded also to Angelica as if she were an old friend. Then she took Felix's arm, and allowed him to escort her to the supper-room.

"Shall we take a seat at the little table again?" she asked.

He shook his head.

"I must be still more alone with you," he said. "Only be brave and follow me. The air here begins to be oppressive."

"Where are you going to?"

"Outside. Not a breath of wind is stirring, and it is the most beautiful spring-like weather. And you are not heated at all! I will wrap' you up in my cloak. Take my word for it, we will not even catch a cold in the head."

"Go out into the dark garden?" She involuntarily slackened her step. "What will they think of us?"

"That we love one another, my darling, and want to be alone. Besides, it will occur to very few of these good people to miss us, or to make any remarks about the subject. And since you have once ventured into this bad society, and no one knows what may happen to-morrow, and whether there will still be time then—"

"You are right," she interrupted hastily. "It was merely the last sign of the stupid old habit. Come; I think myself I should not be alive to-morrow if the night passed without my having told you everything."

He drew her close to his side, and they left the hall together. The angel with the flaming sword had fallen asleep over his mug of beer; but as Felix had been the last to arrive, he easily found his hat and cloak in the dressing-room without Fridolin's assistance. He carefully wrapped a large woolen shawl, which he recognized as belonging to Angelica, about the head and shoulders of his sweetheart, and then threw his own cloak over the whole, so that she would have been well protected even for a colder night.

"But don't cover up your face entirely; I must have a chance to find your lips!" he whispered, and immediately kissed her as if to put her to the test. But she held him tight, and with a passionate submission, of which he had hardly believed her capable, returned his kiss and held up her glowing face to his, submitting to his stormy caresses in happy confusion, and returning them anew.

Not until she was startled by a noise did she ask him in a pleading voice to desist. Then he put his arm about her and went out with her into the mild winter's night, covered peacefully in its snowy mantle. No star looked down from heaven, but it seemed to these two happy be-

ings, wandering all alone among the trees, as if the world about them were in flames, and they were walking through it unscathed, for in their hearts there raged a hotter fire.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the mean time the ball went on, notwithstanding the absence of this happy couple, and no one seemed to miss anything. But the later it grew the more impatiently did the eyes of the red-bearded Capuchin wander toward the door through which he was expecting the angel of Paradise to enter and announce that a guest in a cowl was standing outside the door and waiting for admission. He racked his brains in the vain effort to imagine what could possibly have detained his lady, who, only a short time before, had expressed such a strong desire to be present at the masquerade; and when it struck eleven, and nothing had appeared, he secretly gave up the affair as lost. As he had made up his mind that the mysterious stranger would in the end reveal herself in all her beauty, and afford him an opportunity to celebrate a great triumph, he naturally felt very much put out at finding that he had been playing a fool's part, and he slunk about as embarrassed and wretched as a wet sparrow.

But his distress proved useless, after all. The intermission that preceded the cotillon had begun, and every one had streamed into the supper-room to eat and drink, when Fridolin, entering the hall with his flaming sword under his arm, nodded to him mysteriously, and whispered that there was some one outside who wished to speak with him. The monk rushed into the hall with

most unclerical haste, and was not disappointed. She whom he expected stood before him.

She acknowledged his welcome, but in such a formal tone that he found a good deal of difficulty in stammering out some gallant reproaches for her late arrival. Her chief anxiety seemed to be that her disguise was not sufficient to prevent her from being recognized. When he had somewhat relieved her fears on this score and had, as an additional precaution, arranged her white eyebrows and beard so that they should cover a little more of the delicate face, she asked why no music could be heard from the hall. He explained to her the reason of the pause, and wanted to escort her in without further ceremony. But she insisted upon waiting until the dance should begin again, and begged him to leave her and rejoin the company until that time.

His chivalrous heart would not consent to this, so he staid outside with the beautiful unknown, who had taken possession of the chair at Fridolin's table, and who answered in monosyllables to his neat speeches and appeared to be in a strange state of excitement, and entirely absorbed in her own thoughts.

At length, the first sound of the fiddle inside gave the signal for his release ; but not until the trembling of the floor made it apparent that the couples had once more begun the dance, did the muffled figure rise and seize the arm of her companion. Rosenbusch felt that she trembled slightly ; he could not imagine what should make her, but he was already too much abashed by her reserve to rally her upon her strange timidity.

The fact that the friar had suddenly associated himself with a colleague did not at first make the sensation he had expected. Then, when the attention of one per-

son after another was drawn to the pair of monks, there was no doubt in the mind of any one as to the identity of the smaller friar, who betrayed the woman both in manner and carriage. The love affair of the battle-painter was too well known not to make every one suspect that the thick white beard, and the bushy eyebrows, concealed the features of the fair Nanny. The fact of her coming so late confirmed this supposition. She had been obliged to wait until her parents were asleep, so that she might steal to the ball undetected. They all wished her hearty joy of her stolen pleasure, and were only surprised—since no one doubted her fondness for dancing—that she did not at once join her companion in a waltz, instead of drawing her cowl still lower over her eyes and walking slowly past the different groups, examining the costumes with a searching glance.

In this fashion the couple had already passed down the whole length of the hall, when this puzzling woman suddenly stood still and dropped her companion's arm. Her movement was so violent that Rosenbusch gazed at her in amazement. He saw that her eyes were fixed intently upon the seats near the window, where Jansen and Julie, and some of the others who did not care to dance, had again taken their places. But the dance had just come to an end, and those who had been seated had risen in order to mingle with the crowd. The blue eyes under the white eyebrows followed them eagerly, and seemed to take no notice of anything else that passed around them. So much so, at all events, that the efforts of the tall Englishman, who wished the decapitated martyr to introduce him to the new monk, might just as well have been addressed to a statue.

"What is the matter, madame?" whispered Rosen-

busch. "You have grown very pale ; I can see that notwithstanding your cowl. I will lead you to the chairs—you must rest a moment. That noble Venetian over there is my friend Jansen, a splendid sculptor, and the beautiful woman on his arm—"

But she was not listening. Without taking his arm again, she had stepped forward to the empty seat and sunk into a chair.

Rosenbusch stood before her in great embarrassment. He knew less and less what to make of this extraordinary creature.

He was just thinking that he would try and give a humorous turn to the affair, by reminding her that she was in Paradise and not in a convent, when he saw her leap up as if she were set on springs.

She had been frightened by the sound of a deep, angry growl. She turned, trembling from head to foot, and beheld the old dog, who had been sleeping behind the chair, as his custom was, but who now raised himself up, and, wagging his shaggy tail back and forth, fixed a pair of glowing eyes upon the guest.

"Take me away !—take me away !" she whispered to Rosenbusch, and seized his arm. "That furious beast—don't you see how he glares at me ? Good Heavens, how frightened I am !"

"Don't be at all alarmed, dear madame ; it is only old Homo. Here, in Paradise, where the lion lies down by the lamb—"

She clung convulsively to his sleeve, and drew him away from the windows. But it really did seem as though the strange old animal, who paid no attention whatever to the other figures, took a particular interest in the Capuchin's double.

He followed the couple with stately, dignified step, no matter in which direction they turned, shaking his big ears from time to time and emitting that hoarse growl which, with him, was always a sign of violent excitement.

"For God's sake, free me from this monster!" cried the frightened woman, in a choking voice. "I have an unconquerable horror of all dogs, even when they are gentle. And this one—unless you put him out you will force me to leave the hall."

"Down, Homo!—down, old boy!" said the battle-painter, looking round for Jansen with growing embarrassment, for he did not dare to turn out this old and honored guest of Paradise upon his own responsibility. But the animal seemed no longer to recognize the voice of his friend and house-mate. As Rosenbusch put out his hand in order to take him by the collar and gently conduct him out, a howl burst from his throat, so fierce and threatening, that every one standing near started back in alarm. The familiar sound reached Jansen's ear also.

"What's the matter with the old fellow?" he said, listening. "I must go and see," and with these words he turned away from Julie, who, with Angelica, was just on the point of going in search of the young couple whose disappearance they had at last begun to notice.

The music, which had just begun again, broke off suddenly, for a second howl was heard through the room.

At this moment Jansen reached the group that had gathered about the dog, and called him by name. The animal obediently turned his head toward his master; but, when his victim tried to take advantage of this movement to slip away quickly in the crowd, the dog gave

forth a still more angry growl, leaped with a powerful spring after the retreating figure, and caught the end of the gown in his teeth.

"Back, Homo! Come here—back!" cried Jansen, in a voice of command.

But the animal continued to keep his hold. A low cry came from beneath the cowl, and the little hand which was carefully held before the face trembled violently, while the other struggled to tear loose the gown. At this moment, Stephanopulos forced his way through the stupefied crowd of spectators. With a quick movement he seized the furious animal by the throat, with the intention of forcing it back. The dog's teeth let go the gown, but, though a wild howl came from his powerful throat and his eyes turned with a furious glare upon the bold intruder, he succeeded in laying his heavy forepaws on the cord that answered for a girdle, and with such violence that the muffled figure staggered and fell upon the floor. The animal at once laid one of his paws upon the prostrate figure, and, with a loud bark of triumph and violently lashing his tail back and forth, stood by the side of his prey, with an aspect so horrible that even Jansen recoiled from him.

True, it was not this sudden outbreak of fury in his old companion that made him stagger back and stare in horror at the prostrate figure. In her confusion and alarm the stranger had let her cowl fall back, her white beard drop off, and for a few seconds they saw a woman's pale face looking out from the disguise long enough for it to be recognized by Jansen and the young Greek at his side.

"Are you crazy?" cried the latter, excited still more by the sudden discovery. "Why do you stand there like

a statue? Drag off this mad beast before an accident happens, or by all the devils—”

Jansen did not move. His face was ashy pale; they could see his teeth clinched tightly behind his parted lips. All around was breathless stillness, broken only by the heavy breathing of the dog.

“Then we must help ourselves as best we can!” cried Stephanopulos. “To hell with this devil’s brute!”

Quick as a flash he unsheathed a long dagger that was stuck in his belt, and before any one could interfere he had driven the sharp steel down the wide-opened throat of the old animal.

A frightful howl, stifled the next moment by a stream of blood, and then the powerful animal fell back, and, with a dull rattling in the throat, dropped dead beside the woman in the cowl.

CHAPTER VII.

ALL this time the two lovers outside in the garden, absorbed in their happiness, and covered warm with Felix’s broad Spanish cloak, had heard nothing of the gathering storm within-doors, and had not noticed that the clouds had begun to dissolve in a fine rain. But in a little while the wind began to rise, shaking the soft snow from the branches, and driving the cold drops of rain into their faces.

Even then Irene expressed no desire to be taken back into the house. She would have liked to wander by his side forever, through rain and storm. But he, careful of her health, laughingly insisted upon “bringing his little lamb under cover.” “We must take care not to

catch cold," he said. "There are certain times when a cold stands very much in the way of lovers. Come, my darling! I feel as if I should like to dance all night long with you. Good Heavens! what work we shall have in making up for lost time!"

She hung on his arm in full submission. But at this moment they heard the dying howl of the old animal, horribly breaking in upon the stillness of the night.

"What is that?" said Felix. "That sounds altogether too serious for any masquerading joke. In the tropics I was used to such nocturnal voices, and slept quietly in spite of them. But here, under this wintry sky—"

He hurried her toward the house. Then they saw a back-door suddenly thrown open, and two muffled figures rush out hastily and run toward a carriage that was standing waiting in the side-street, about thirty steps from the house, just as on the night when the burning picture disappeared.

They could distinguish nothing but the outline of a monk's cowl.

"Rosenbusch!" cried Felix.

But this call merely had the effect of causing the fleeing persons to redouble their speed. The next moment they reached the carriage, and something white gleamed in the darkness, which Felix's keen eye thought it recognized as the fustanella of the young Greek; then the door was slammed-to, and the carriage rolled off into the darkness at a break-neck pace.

The pair gazed after it in amazement.

"What can it mean?" cried Irene.

Felix said nothing, but shook his head and hurried her on toward the door. They found Fridolin at his post,

but with eyes that glared so from fright and sudden awakening that they did not stop to ask him any questions, but, throwing off their wet wraps, hastened into the hall.

Here a most startling sight greeted their view.

Jansen was crouched motionless on the floor, holding on his knee the bloody head of the dog, his gaze fixed on the stiff, outstretched limbs of his old friend, whose convulsive twitching marked the last pulsation of his ebbing blood.

Julie was kneeling at his side, taking no heed of her yellow skirts, that were spotted with large stains from the dark pool. Their friends were standing about them, completely stupefied ; and even the musicians crept down from the platform, in their grotesque animal costumes, and mixed in among the guests.

At this moment the gaunt figure of Alba, in the shape of their friend Schnetz, stepped out of the awe-struck crowd, advanced to the astonished pair, and, taking them aside, told them all that had passed while they had been out in the garden, pouring out their hearts to one another in utter ignorance of what was going on within. In what connection these puzzling occurrences stood to one another, the lieutenant did not pretend to know. When they recovered from the first shock, and looked about for the author of the whole trouble, they discovered that she had disappeared from the hall with the young Greek.

Rosenbusch then joined them, and Angelica and Elfinger. The battle-painter was plunged in a truly pitiable state of despondency at the tragic end of his adventure. Innocent as he was of it all, he nevertheless persisted in accusing himself of being the author of the murderous affair by introducing this mysterious guest. He gave a

detailed account of the way in which he had made her acquaintance, and asserted again and again that she had done absolutely nothing to provoke the dog. But let that be as it would, the mischief had been done ; the ball was spoiled, and Jansen had lost his good old comrade.

Felix listened to all this with clouded brow. Then he pushed his way through the crowd, and went up to Jansen. The dog had just drawn his last breath. Jansen sprung to his feet when he felt the hand of his friend on his shoulder. He drew himself up erect, and then raised Julie from her knees, but without uttering a word, while his bright eyes, sunk deep in their sockets, wandered slowly about, as if he were trying to remember where he was.

"Have they gone?" he said, after a long pause.

No one answered. Julie took his hand and spoke gently to him, and he replied by a vacant smile and a nod. Then, with a violent shudder, he roused himself, and strode out of the group that had gathered about the dead animal. He advanced to his friends, and, speaking once more in his usual voice, requested Schnetz to send for a carriage, as he wished to take the dead dog home. Then, with few words, but with a manner that forbade all remonstrances, he entreated them not to be disturbed on his account, and not to leave the ball. He made even Julie promise this, and forced himself to speak quite as usual. After this he took Rosenbusch aside, and conversed with him in a low voice for a considerable time, never lifting his eyes from the floor ; finally he shook hands with him, and left the room.

Julie and Felix accompanied him out to the carriage, in which the body of the dog had been already laid. He got in with evident difficulty, and gave the two at parting

a hand that was as cold as ice. He did all this as if he were still enveloped in some dream, from which even the presence and sympathy of those most dear to him could not arouse him.

Fridolin had mounted on the box by the side of the driver, and in this fashion they pursued their long drive through the cold, rainy night, and drew up in front of the studio just as the clock was striking twelve. The driver lent them his assistance in lifting the heavy body of the dog out of the carriage, and carrying him in. They laid him down in the little garden behind the house, and, with shovel and pickaxe, dug a deep grave, into which they lowered the huge animal. The driver had gone on his way again, and Jansen stood motionless on the brink of the grave, gazing down on the dark mass that they were leaving there to crumble into dust. But Fridolin took the two artificial roses which had belonged to his angel's dress, and which he still wore behind his ears, and cast them down upon the dead animal.

"It is winter," he said, "and a dark night ; and we have nothing fresher. But go and get some sleep, Herr Professor. I will put his bed in order with my spade. And though he was only an animal, perhaps after all we shall see him again at the resurrection ; and if there should be a heaven for dogs, Herr Professor, he will go there sooner than many a priest. And why ? Because he knew what friendship and kindness meant ; and that is what nine men out of ten don't know ; and he never treated a poor fellow-man like a dog, which can't be said of everybody. I don't think the good God will object if I offer up a few paternosters for the poor dog's soul."

Jansen nodded in silence, and turned away. Then he went into the house, and stepped into his studio. It was

cold as ice in the large room ; the wind roared down the chimney, and rattled in the iron stove. Yet for all that the unhappy man could not make up his mind to go back to his lodgings. He threw himself upon the low sofa and spread his cloak over his benumbed limbs. So he lay there perfectly still, and listened to the falling of the rain and the noise made by the spade. His eyes were shut. But for all that he never ceased to see, in the darkness of his own heart, a pale face, only too well known, from which the mask had just fallen, and which, despite its frightened, supplicating look, stared up at him like the head of Medusa.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN he started up, late in the morning, after a short sleep, and saw the snow drifting sadly down outside the window, the face at once rose up before him again ; and the frightened look of those blue eyes, that he had hoped never to see more, and that now came to begin anew their designs upon his happiness, made him shudder even more than the harsh breath of the winter morning. And yet at first he had difficulty in believing that it had really happened. It was only from his great exhaustion that he realized what a storm he had passed through.

He was surprised himself at the stolid, torpid, icy calmness with which he was able to look back on the frightful scene, as if the apparition of the night, that yesterday made his hair stand on end, had no power over him in broad daylight. He thought about the loss of his faithful old companion too, as something that had happened long ago. But he was pained by the thought that he had

let the faithful animal be buried in his masquerade trappings, with the gaudy ribbons and the guitar on his back. He even went so far as to seriously deliberate whether he should not have the grave opened again and cleared of all the tawdry finery. However, he put it off until evening ; and when evening came he had much more pressing matters to attend to.

He was firmly resolved to put an end to this condition of affairs ; to tear the ever-rankling and festering barb from out the wound, let it cost what it might. How this could best be done he did not know as yet. But upon one point his mind was definitely made up ; he owed it to Julie to render a repetition of such scenes impossible.

He left the studio and went into the city. He directed his steps to the hotel where the Russian countess was staying. To his amazement, he learned there that no one had ever heard of this Madame St.-Aubain, which was the name Rosenbusch had given him the preceding evening. The porter did, indeed, remember a person such as Jansen described ; the lady spent the whole day with the countess no later than yesterday. But she was not stopping in the hotel, and he had not learned what her name was.

He would speak about it to the countess herself : could he see her for a moment ? asked the sculptor.

The porter looked at his watch. It was only nine o'clock. He had orders to admit no one before eleven.

So there was nothing left for him but to be patient, hard as it was.

Wandering about without any definite plan, his heart led him to where Julie lived. But, the moment he saw the house in the distance, he turned back. It was impossible for him to look her in the face again until he could say to her : "It is all over ; you have nothing more to fear

from my past ; the spectre has been sent back among the dead."

He went into the Pinakothek, where at this time of the year and day the large, unheated halls stand empty. He stretched himself on the sofa that stands in the centre of the immense room, and looked over the walls with half-closed eyes. The power and warmth of life of these noble pictures acted, without his knowing it, upon his spirits, and his mood continued to grow quieter and more gentle, until at last he fell fast asleep, his hat pushed down so low over his eyes that the attendants and the few visitors took him for an exceedingly studious painter, who made use of his hat-brim to protect him from the reflection of the light from above.

He had to make up for the sleep he had lost in the night ; thus three, four hours went by without his waking. At length one of the attendants, to whom the matter began to look rather odd, stepped up and discovered who it was. However, he had altogether too much respect for the artist to disturb his sleep before the time came for closing the gallery. Jansen sprang to his feet, asked what time it was, and was startled to find how many hours he had lost. He left the gallery in great haste, and hurried to the hotel.

The countess was too unwell to receive any visits to-day, the porter told him.

Jansen shrugged his shoulders, growled out a few unintelligible words, and began to mount the stairs without paying any further heed to this answer. Up-stairs he received a similar reply from the countess's maid, who met him in the corridor.

"Take this card to the countess. I regret to disturb her, but it is absolutely necessary that I speak with her."

The girl took the card, acted as though the name which she read on it was perfectly unknown to her, and then remarked :

"Just at this moment it is really quite impossible for the countess to receive you. The doctor is with her and is renewing the bandages. That always gives her such pain that she is forced to lie perfectly still for two or three hours after the operation, unless she would have convulsions. Perhaps, if you would be good enough to call again toward evening—"

Jansen gave the tricky girl a look that confused even her brazen face.

"I am convinced, my good girl, that you are lying to me in the most cold-blooded manner possible ; the doctor is not with your mistress, nor does she need repose. I have a great mind to thrust you aside and quietly make my way in for myself. But, in order that your mistress may be convinced that I am entirely courteous, I will act as though I really believed you, and call again in a few hours. But then—" and he raised his voice a little, in case there should be any one behind the door, listening to the conversation—"then I shall expect that the nerves of the countess will have nothing to say against my requesting a ten minutes' interview. It is now two o'clock. At four I shall take the liberty of knocking again at this door."

"Perhaps it is just as well," he said, as he went down the stairs. "I have eaten nothing since yesterday evening. An empty stomach goes badly with diplomatic negotiations. And I want to keep as cool as possible."

He stepped into a restaurant, hurriedly took a little food, and hastened to get out into the street again. He felt better out in the cold air than anywhere else ; he

sauntered slowly along, like a promenader in the most beautiful spring weather, baring his head to the storm and letting the flakes of snow fall upon his hair and forehead, so that the people whom he met turned to look after him. As he had a long time to wait before the appointed hour would arrive, he wandered through the town, and at last, by roundabout ways, came back once more to his atelier. Fridolin reported that Miss Julie had been there twice in person, and the second time had written something. The lieutenant and the other gentlemen had also been there to see him, and the baron made him take him to the grave and tell him the whole story. Herr Rosenbusch was the only one who had not yet appeared, and Fräulein Angelica had only shown herself a moment, just to water her flowers, and had gone away again. However, he had made a fire in the studio, and it was warm in among the saints also, although the assistants had taken a holiday on their own account.

Had the professor—for so he obstinately persisted in calling Jansen—any further orders to give?

Jansen shook his head and entered his workshop. He found Julie's note. She begged him, in Italian, which they had been studying together for some months, to release her from the agonizing uncertainty in regard to his mood and in regard to what he intended to do. She was only going out to make a visit to Irene, and then she would stay at home and expect him. The note closed with a few loving words and another earnest request for him to come to her that evening, all of which did him unspeakable good.

But he remained firm in his determination not to go to her until he had cleared up the whole matter.

He sat down on the sofa and had just begun to draw

up a small table, in order to write her a few comforting lines, when a quick knock on the door interrupted him.

He was startled to see Frances's nurse come in. This little woman, who had a houseful of children and a head full of cares, seldom visited him—and never without her little charge.

Her black eyes, usually so cheery, began to spy anxiously about in every corner of the studio, the moment she had entered it.

"Is your child here?" she stammered breathlessly.

"With me? No. What made you think so?"

He stepped up to her hastily. "What is the matter, my good woman? Did you send little Frances here?"

"Not here! Oh! Heavens!—but perhaps she may be up-stairs with Fräulein Angelica—without your knowing about it. I will go right up—"

"Fräulein Angelica is not up-stairs; I am all alone in the house. Tell me, for God's sake—"

He stopped suddenly; a horrible suspicion paralyzed his tongue.

The exhausted woman sank down on the pedestal of the great group, and wiped her eyes.

"The child—?" he asked at length, with great difficulty.

She looked up at him with supplicating eyes.

"Don't kill me! I don't know where it is—some one has taken it away—my anxiety drove me here—I have done all I can!—"

She seemed to expect nothing less than that he would strike her dead after hearing this confession.

But, as he stood motionless, she mustered up courage to tell him, in a disconnected way, what had happened. She had gone into the city after dinner, and her old mother had, as usual, taken charge of the children. Imme-

diately after she went out—as if she had only been waiting for that—a strange lady had come to the house.

“Young, with blue eyes?” interrupted the sculptor, with difficulty unclenching his teeth.

No. An elderly lady, not far from fifty, dressed in black and heavily veiled. She asked for Frances, and said she was to bring her to Fräulein Julie, only for half an hour. It was a surprise they were preparing for the father, she said; Fräulein Angelica was going to make a sketch of the child; a drosky was waiting outside the door, and she asked the good grandmamma to put on the child’s little cloak, but not to make any other change in its dress. The old woman, as soon as her deafness allowed her to catch the meaning of this story, had thought it rather strange, at first; but the explanation given by the stranger that Fräulein Angelica was prevented from coming and getting the child herself, by a slight cold she had caught on the evening before, had quieted her again. Besides, the child would be brought back in a couple of hours; Fräulein Julie would bring it home herself. As the stranger seemed to be so well acquainted with all the people and circumstances of which she spoke, the old woman could offer no reasonable objection. But the stranger had scarcely left the house when she was filled with an unaccountable anxiety, and had impatiently awaited her daughter’s return.

She, however, had been detained in the city longer than she had expected by a number of errands; and, when she finally did return and found that the child had not been brought back, she immediately set out in the greatest anxiety to look for it. But she found no trace either at Julie’s (who was herself absent, the old servant Erich said, for she had not come back to her dinner at the usual

time), or at Angelica's house. At the latter place they told her that the artist had not gone out until about noon, for she had risen very late ; besides, she had found the weather too dark for working. Her last faint hope had been that the child would be found at her father's—and here, too, there was no trace of her !

The woman's eyes filled with tears while telling him the story. She had slipped down from the pedestal and now lay, weeping bitterly, at the feet of the silent man, as if she would disarm his anger by this humble posture.

"Calm yourself !" she heard him say at last. "You are innocent in the whole affair. Believe me ; the child is not lost—oh, no ! it is in excellent hands. Can a child be safer anywhere than with the mother who bore it ?"

The weeping woman raised herself and looked at him inquiringly.

"Yes, yes !" he repeated, laughing bitterly. "You have never been told about that, my good friend ; it was very thoughtless of me not to have spoken to you about it the very first thing this morning. My wife has made her appearance again ; she gave me a specimen of her acting last night—a benefit performance in Paradise—a short scene, but very effective. And now this is the second act. That the third, in which I am to play too, will be the last, you may be very sure."

"She is here, she has the child, and you know where she is to be found ?"

"Not yet. However, I know some one who knows all about it, whom I think I can talk into giving me the necessary information. By-the-way, it must be about the time—almost four o'clock ; let us go !"

"Go alone, unless you have particular need of me.

My knees can hardly bear me. The anxiety—Oh ! let me rest here just for a few moments.”

“I’ll order a drosky. You mustn’t think of walking back such a long distance. We will ride part of the way together.”

He called the janitor and sent him out for a carriage. Then he paced with long strides up and down the studio in profound silence, while the woman sank back into a chair, and struggled hard to compose herself.

In the midst of this painful stillness, they all at once heard the voice of the battle painter in the entry.

He and Felix came in together, and his unsteady step, pale face, and disheveled aspect, showed plainly enough that the horrors of the preceding night were still fresh in his memory. He greeted Jansen with a most depressed mien, and the jokes that he tried to make sounded anything but cheerful. He would not have shown himself in such a wretched condition had he not happened to fall in with something that might possibly be of importance to Jansen.

An hour ago he had crept into the open air for the first time that day, his head still heavy from the wine that he had dolefully poured down his throat the night before, in the hope of drowning his dismay at that murderous tragedy with poor old Homo. As he did not want to meet any of his acquaintances, he took the road that leads out through the gates, visiting, among other places, the cemetery, and feeling quite in a mood to seek a resting-place there himself.

On his return, as he was passing the Sendling gate, he saw a traveling carriage, loaded down with trunks, roll out and turn into the country high-road.

This struck him as being rather a peculiar proceeding at

this time of year and in this century of railways ; and for that reason he looked pretty closely at the equipage as it drove by. To his great amazement he recognized in one of the ladies, who was just bending forward a little, the stranger of the night before, the mysterious Madame de St.-Aubain, while sitting opposite her on the back seat was no less a person than that Greek Don Juan, Monsieur Stephanopulos. They were talking earnestly with one another, and did not notice him. The lady looked devilish pretty, her face being set off very coquettishly by a black spangled baschlik, and her blue eyes—

“Why, what’s the matter with you, Jansen ?” he cried, breaking off in alarm, for he saw his friend suddenly grow pale. “I thought I was telling you pleasant news, in reporting that this fatal person, and the murderer of poor Homo, were taking themselves out of your sight—”

“Did you see a child with them ?” cried the sculptor, almost beside himself, and turning fiercely upon the innocent narrator.

“A child ? It is possible there was a child in the carriage. At least I saw all sorts of wrappings and shawls lying on the other two seats. But, for heaven’s sake, my friend—”

“Good ! Thank you. I know enough. An hour ago, you say ? And on the Sendling post-road ? Good ! Excuse me, my good woman—I—I must be off. But I must be prepared for all emergencies.”

He rushed up to the old wardrobe in the corner, tore open the door with trembling hands, and drew out an old-fashioned pistol, covered with dust and rust.

At this moment he felt Felix’s hand on his shoulder.

“What is it ?” he said, without turning round.

“Of course I am going with you,” said his friend, in

a suppressed voice. "As matters stand, I think I know pretty well what the trouble is. What I don't yet know, you can explain to me on the road; but I can never let you start alone on this sad hunt; and, as my blood is cooler than yours, you must let me be the leader. They chose the highway because the telegraph would have cut them off if they had gone by rail, and they have not got much of a start yet. For this reason, I think there can be no doubt but what we shall overtake them if we take horses. Come! The drosky that Fridolin has just ordered will take us in ten minutes to the stable where I hire my horses. Then we will ride by my lodgings, and, if you insist upon it, I will put my revolver in my pocket. That old horse-pistol wouldn't inspire Herr Stephanopulos with any great respect. Do you agree to this, old boy?"

"Let me follow in the carriage," pleaded the little woman. "I shall die of anxiety unless I do, and who knows but what I can be of good service to you. The poor child, and among strange people too, may be made sick by the fright and the cold drive—"

Felix quieted her as well as he could, and his firm, determined bearing had so good an effect that Rosenbusch also promised to keep perfectly quiet until their return, and not alarm either Julie or Angelica by saying anything about the matter. Then Felix pushed his friend, who submitted to his guidance like a child, out of the room, stopped a-moment on the stairs to write a word of excuse to Irene, who was expecting him that evening, and then, getting into the drosky, he ordered the driver to drive as fast as possible. Half an hour later the two friends, mounted on fast horses, were spurring along the high-road that runs from the Sendling gate across the broad Isar plain into the mountains beyond.

CHAPTER IX.

THE mist of evening hung over the still country. The heavy snow-clouds, piled into huge heaps by the winds, drifted slowly across the dreary sky, now and then letting fall a stray flake. To the right and left of the road, whose deep ruts were filled with a half-frozen slush, the trees stretched up to heaven their black and dripping branches; on which even the crows refused to alight.

In this dismal wintry desert, where, far and wide, no human being could be seen, where no dog barked at the horses, the words seemed to freeze on the lips of the two horsemen. Jansen had informed Felix only of those facts which were positively essential to a knowledge of the case; of his determination to make an end of the affair, and his belief that the abduction of the child was either to be used as a means of extorting some concessions from him, or else that it was a mere trick on the part of the mother to let him feel her power, and to present herself to the world in the character of an abused wife, who sought by this desperate deed to recover a right of which she had long been deprived.

Felix had but little to say in reply.

"Perhaps it is better, after all, that the matter should be brought to a crisis," he thought to himself. "Who knows how long it would have dragged on if he had always been obliged to negotiate from a distance. If he only keeps cool and puts forth all his energy, he will probably effect more now, when it is likely that her conscience troubles her in regard to the farce of yesterday, than he could otherwise have hoped for."

Whereupon he put spurs to his horse, and, in spite of the interest with which his friend's fate inspired him, relapsed into his own thoughts. He had been with Irene for a few hours that morning. The feeling that he brought away with him from those happy hours, the certainty that henceforth his way was clear before him, took complete possession of him, and made him unsusceptible to all the dreariness of this strange ride. In addition to this he was filled with joy at being able to help his friend at such a moment, as well as at being a witness of the favorable change which he believed was about to take place in Jansen's lot. Absorbed in these thoughts, he caught himself whistling a merry tune, and beating time to it with his riding-whip; but, seeing that Jansen suddenly spurred on his horse and rode past him, he broke off, urged his own animal to greater speed, and, after overtaking his friend again, rode along at a sharp trot by the side of his brooding companion.

Upon reaching the next village—where, notwithstanding the early hour, everybody seemed to have gone to bed—they drew up before the tavern, and made inquiries concerning a traveling-carriage that they thought must have passed by the place. The few peasants who were in the guests' room, playing cards with the landlord, came out to the door, and gave it as their opinion that, at this time of year, no other carriage than the doctor's or the priest's one-horse chaise would show itself in those parts. They stood shaking their heads, and looking after the retiring horsemen, as they again dashed forward.

"We shall overtake them in Grossheselohe, at the railway bridge," said Felix. "They can't cross there with the carriage, and will wait for the express train, so as to go on early to-morrow morning. They *must* have passed,

unless Rosenbusch was dreaming. These people in the tavern are so befogged with beer and schnapps, that it is very probable they didn't hear the wheels."

They reached the village of Grossheselohe as one of the church clocks was striking six. A rather lively company was assembled in the village ale-house. The waiter-girl, who stepped to the door upon hearing the approaching sound of horses' hoofs, knew nothing of any carriage bringing strangers from the city. But a drunken hostler, who came staggering out of one of the stalls, muttered some unintelligible words and pointed to the road leading into the wood, though he could not be induced to give any more distinct information.

"Forward!" cried Felix. "We have no other choice, and I know the road through the wood. Undoubtedly, Stephanopulos is also very well acquainted with the country about here. This region was the classic site of the May festivals that the artists used to give. Take my word for it, we shall find our fugitives in the next village."

He urged on his horse, but the heavy darkness now forced them to moderate their speed. Riding at a walk, they plunged into the blackness of the little wood which fringes the high bank of the Isar, and which, in summertime, is the goal of so many weary city-folk. Now, it was so gloomy that even Felix felt a cold shudder pass through his very bones. Down in the deep ravines the water roared, and the wind sighed mournfully through the bare tree-tops. Jansen's animal shied and reared, but his rider sat in the saddle like the stone Commendatore; he had hardly spoken a word for an hour.

Suddenly Felix reined in his horse. "Do you see there?" said he, in a suppressed voice. "I'll wager we

have them. It's high time. My horse has gone lame in its right fore-foot."

Across a cleared patch in the wood they saw the village which the artists had used as a rallying-point in the picnics of which Felix had spoken. A house, with a rather high roof, stood out like a silhouette against the gray sky, showing, in its second story, a row of brightly-lighted windows.

"Unless they happen to be celebrating a wedding here, other guests must be in those rooms," said Felix. "Let's ride nearer, and cut across this field; although there's not much fear that they could escape us now, even if we should besiege their hiding-place from the open road."

The horses, giving a low neigh—for they scented a crib of oats—stamped through the slippery mud, and drew up before the fence that separated the inn court-yard from the street.

"We are right," whispered Felix, who stood up in his stirrups in order to look over the fence. "The carriage is standing there in the yard—two people are busy unloading the trunks—the fellow holding the lantern is probably the coachman. Now for it, in God's name!"

He swung himself from his horse, and stepped up to his friend to help him out of the saddle. "Come," he said, patting the streaming horse on the neck. "Whatever you are going to do, do it quickly. You will probably find the whole company together, up-stairs; and, while you are doing what is right up there, I will see to our horses and follow in five minutes. Or do you want me to go up with you at once?"

A deep sigh, the first sign of life that the silent man had yet given, was the only answer. He seemed to have

considerable difficulty in getting out of the stirrups, as if his limbs were frozen fast to the saddle. Then he stood for a few moments in a deep reverie, and seemed to be struggling to get the better of a strong aversion, before he could bring himself to enter the house. Felix accompanied him as far as the door.

"Remember to keep down that Berserker blood of yours!" he whispered to him.

Jansen nodded, and pressed his hand as if to ratify the vow. Then he stood still again, raised his hat to wipe his forehead, and then strode quickly across the threshold.

Felix gazed after him with a feeling of painful sympathy. He would much rather have undertaken this difficult mission in his friend's stead. But he knew him too well to dare even to propose such a thing.

So he led the two horses by the bridles, pushed open the gate, and entered the court.

The hostlers, who were busied about the traveling-carriage, rose up and stared in amazement when they heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and saw this young stranger coolly approaching them.

"Good-evening!" he said. "I suppose you still have room in your stable and a few dry blankets. These beasts are as wet as if they had just been drawn out of the water."

No answer. The coachman turned the lantern full in the face of the new-comer, and shrugged his shoulders.

"You'll be no losers for taking good care of my animals," continued Felix. "In the mean time, I think I can find the stable-door for myself."

Without further parley he took the lantern from the coachman's hand—who, in his confusion, was at a loss how

to bear himself toward this distinguished-looking gentleman—and proceeded to light his horses to the manger.

At this moment he heard a voice calling across the court, urging the people who were unpacking the carriage to make haste. The owner of this voice stepped out of the back-door ; and, seeing the people standing there idle, he marched quickly up to the spot with the intention of giving them a sound rating. Before he could utter a word, however, he started back in confusion—for Felix had also stood still, and raised his lantern so that his figure could be distinctly seen.

Stephanopulos, bare-headed and wrapped in a shawl, stood before him, presenting an appearance that was anything but imposing. However, observing the sarcastic mien of the young baron, he soon succeeded in recovering—outwardly, at least—his usual presence of mind.

“You here !” he cried. “What an unexpected meeting ! Really, if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes—”

“*Bon soir, mon cher !* Can I get quarters here, too ?” interrupted Felix. “Yes, you are right ; it is I in person. And, for that matter, though you are surprised to see me here in weather like this, which can hardly be said to offer any great inducements for making country excursions, it is really no more surprising than that I should find *you*. We Northerners are accustomed to winter campaigns. But for one who grew up at the foot of the Parthenon—”

“Are you—alone, or—is some one else—” stammered the unfortunate man.

“Only a good friend of mine, who chanced to have business here, and who will also be rejoiced to see you. Really now, without compliments, we hardly had a right to expect this agreeable meeting so near the city. Where

are you going to, sir?" he suddenly raised his voice. "Back into the house? I must earnestly request you to favor me with your company for a short time outside here. Your sense of delicacy ought to teach you that the business which occupies my friend within-doors there will bear no witnesses but those most nearly concerned, and however much you appear to consider yourself as one of the family—"

"Let me alone!" cried the youth, in whose dark eyes an evil light began to gleam. "Why do you stand in my way? What right have you to concern yourself with my affairs?"

"My dear sir," said Felix, dropping the horses' bridles and stepping close up to Stephanopulos, "before all things, don't scream so loud. In your own interest, I advise you not to be too grandiloquent about this affair. The person who is most directly concerned in it might resent any remonstrance on your part less politely than I do. If you care at all to get out of this ridiculous scrape in as respectable a manner as possible—"

"Take care!" cried the other. "You insult me! You shall give me satisfaction for thinking me capable of such a piece of infamy! What! desert an unfortunate woman, who has trusted herself to my protection, in the presence of a man who has always abused her, and has sworn to kill her if she ever comes into his sight again! Let me alone, I tell you! I will—I must go back to the house! I must stand by her—I must—"

"It is very magnanimous of you to want to," interrupted Felix, coldly, as he seized the other's arm with an iron grip. "But, in the mean while, I will take care that you don't. I would propose to you to take a walk in the neighboring wood, in order to cool off your hot blood a

little, until the husband has settled matters with his wife. If you should interfere with him, I'm very much afraid he would shoot you without taking any more time for reflection than you did yesterday when you put an end to the poor dog. But I am sorry for you, my good fellow. And for that reason, and also to preserve you for art and for further adventures—"

While saying these words he had been forcing Stephanopulos toward the side where the stable was. There was a door standing open, apparently leading up-stairs to the hay-loft.

"In here!" he said, imperiously, suddenly letting go of the youth's arm and sending him stumbling over the threshold.

The Greek curse that rose to his lips was stifled by the furious passion which blazed up in him.

"Help! help!" he shrieked, beside himself with maddening rage.

But Felix shut the door upon him, quickly turned the key in the lock, and went back to the horses. The prisoner could be heard raging on the other side of the door; a moment afterward his face appeared at the little barred window. A blow of his fist shivered the pane.

"If you don't open on the instant, you scoundrel—you blackguard—"

"I repeat my good advice," said Felix, stepping up close to the window. "Behave yourself quietly and yield to force, unless you want to make your position worse than it is already. What I have just done is for your own good, and your imprisonment will hardly last longer than half an hour. Afterward, of course, I will afford you all so-called satisfaction, with pleasure—as soon my time will allow me."

He lifted his hat a little, stuck the key in his pocket, and resumed his hold of the horses' bridles.

The coachman and the stable-boys, who had looked on at this singular scene in open-mouthed surprise, were so taken aback by his manner, that, without attempting to make any effort in behalf of the prisoner, they officiously hastened to lend assistance in leading the horses into the barn. Felix gave a few directions about how they were to be treated, and threw a thaler to each of the men. Then he took the lantern in his hand again, gave orders that no one should follow him, and strode across the yard to join his friend.

CHAPTER X.

WHILE this violent and yet almost ridiculous scene was enacted in the court, Jansen had been mounting the dark stairs with a heavy foot and a heavier breath. No sound of a human being was heard in the house ; only the roaring and crackling of the open fire in the kitchen below. Half way up the stairs he stood still and listened ; it seemed to him as if he heard the voice of his child. But it was only the ringing in his ears, as the blood seemed to surge and boil in his veins.

"She will be asleep by this time," he said to himself. "So much the better ! She won't hear then what I have to say to her mother."

He trembled all over. And yet he had no fear of this meeting, that was to be the last. He was afraid of himself, of the dark, violent spirit that made him clench his fists and gnash his teeth. "Be quiet !" he said to himself, "be quiet ! She is not worth such fury !"

He hastened up the last few steps and found himself in a long, dark corridor. At one end a thin ray of light made its way through a keyhole, and a broader gleam shone through the crack between the door and the bent and warping threshold.

"It must be there!" he said. He took off his hat, and passed his hand through his wet hair. "Let us make an end of it!" said he, unconsciously repeating over and over again the words "an end!—an end—an end!"

Then he stood before the door and listened. A voice which he did not recognize was speaking; he stooped down and peeped in through the keyhole. His eye lighted directly upon the face of an elderly woman who was talking earnestly, but perfectly quietly. He recognized the old singer, his wife's mother, whom he had always disliked even at the time of his maddest infatuation. She sat in a corner of the sofa, and drank now and then, in the short pauses she made, from a little silver cup that stood by the side of a traveling-flask. At the same time she broke up a biscuit and put the pieces in her mouth with an affected movement of the hand, all the while displaying her false teeth to advantage. Near her, sunk back in an arm-chair, lay her daughter; she was dressed entirely in black, which became her white skin and deep blue eyes charmingly. She was playing with a pair of scissors, making them flash in the candle-light, and looked as wearied and indifferent to all about her, as though she had just come home from the theatre where she been acting in some tiresome piece with only tolerable success.

Suddenly she sprang up with a loud shriek. The door had opened noiselessly; and, instead of the young companion whom she had expected to see enter, the very man

stood before her, from whom she had fled to this obscure hiding-place.

The words died on her lips ; even the old actress, who who was not ordinarily easily disconcerted, sat as if she were petrified ; and only her fingers, still convulsively crumbling up the biscuits, seemed to be alive.

"Leave the room ; I have something to say to my wife !" Jansen said to her in a low voice and without violence. "Do you hear what I say ? Go away this instant ! but through *this* door, by which I entered."

He wanted to prevent her from taking the child with her, for he took it for granted that it had been put to bed in the adjoining room.

The women exchanged a quick look. These few moments sufficed to restore the younger one to self-possession.

"You must not leave me," she said. "In whatever I am to hear—since I am conscious of my innocence—I need shun no witnesses, least of all my own mother."

And as she spoke she sank back again into the chair, and passed her hand across her eyes, as though overcome by painful memories. The old woman on the sofa did not move. They could only hear how she murmured softly to herself : "Good God ! Good God ! What a scene ! What a catastrophe !"

"I repeat my demand !" the sculptor said with emphasis. "Will you wait for me to take your arm and lead you out ?"

"Very good ; I will go ; I will not let matters be brought to the worst," cried the mother, rising with a pathetic gesture. Then she bent down over Lucie and whispered something in her ear. "No, no," hastily answered the latter, "not a word to him. That would only

make the matter worse. Go, if it must be so. I am not afraid !”

She spoke the last words aloud and facing toward Jansen, whom she looked straight in the eyes without a trace of terror. Any stranger would have been deceived by this air of conscious innocence.

The old singer slammed the door behind her. They heard her, as she passed down the corridor. But it did not escape Jansen's ears that she crept back and remained standing outside the door to listen.

“Let her stay, for what I care !” he said to himself, “as long as I needn't see her face.” Then came again the feverish : “We must make an end—an end—an end !” He took his stand before the stove, in which the remains of a fire still glowed. With folded arms he stood gazing down upon the woman who had been the curse of his life. In the midst of his terrible anguish it flashed across him that not a feature of her face gave evidence of the seven years that had passed since they had been separated. She even appeared younger, more girlish and more unsophisticated than when he had first known her. Nothing could be read on those soft lips or on that clear forehead but a sort of curiosity, an innocent wonder as to what was coming. Her soft, quiet hand had taken up the scissors again, and was playfully opening and shutting them.

An almost unbearable thought, a crushing sense of shame suddenly rose within him, as he realized that this mask had once deceived him ; had excited him to mad passion, and had flattered him into reposing in it an undying faith—this smooth lie, this cold smile, that did not desert her even now, when he whom she had so bitterly injured had to put forth all his strength in order to pass through this hour manfully.

"I am here," said he at length, "to—to make an end of this. I hope you will not make it more difficult for me than is necessary. I will not ask you the reasons that have led you to act against our agreement, and to cross my path again. You have a fondness for masquerading, and I must let you indulge it as much as you like ; all the more as I, for my part, give you up utterly. I merely wish to warn you that if you ever again feel a desire to approach me in any kind of disguise, take care not to lose the mask. I could not bear to see your face again, and my hot blood might play me false."

She bent her eyes upon him with a perfectly unembarrassed look, as if asking whether he was really serious when he said these words—whether he really could not bear the sight of this gentle face.

"Have no fear," she answered, softly, in an almost bashful tone. "I am not coming again. I have seen all that I wanted to see. It was certainly a pardonable curiosity that made me want to see what kind of a face one must have to find favor in your eyes ; and if I—"

"Silence !" he interrupted, imperiously. "You shall hear me to the end—to the very end. If, as I hope, you are not unmindful of your own interests, and will listen to reason, our last interview will end peacefully, and I will give you my thanks for having brought it about. I will then take my child away with me, and promise you that I will try hard to think of you without anger."

"The child ?"

"The child that you have just stolen, that you wished to keep with you in pawn, that you might carry out Heaven knows what miserable scheme."

"You are very much mistaken," she interposed, and

a slight blush mounted to her cheeks. "The child is not here."

"Don't attempt to deceive me!" he cried, with sudden fury. "I know you have kidnapped the child—it is asleep in the next room—you fled to this place to conceal your capture from me; to-morrow, early, you intended to continue the flight."

"You are raving again!" she said calmly, and laid the scissors down on the table. "Look yourself, and see whether the child is here with me. There stands the lamp; search the house, if you do not believe me."

He stretched out his hand mechanically, took the light, and opened the door of the adjoining chamber. The beds that stood there were empty.

With a threatening look he turned upon her.

"Shall I search the house room by room?" he asked, his voice trembling with anger.

"It would be useless trouble. I swear to you, I did not bring the child with me."

"Trickster!" he cried, setting the light down on the table with such force that the flame was almost extinguished. "Only this once the truth—only this once! Where is the child? What have you done with her? In whose hands—"

"In the best of hands," she interrupted, "under the very safest protection, so help me God! I—it is true—I had an irresistible longing to see my poor child once more, whom you have made motherless and to whom you wish to give a mother who can have no heart for the orphan. If it is a crime for the real mother not to wish to see her child given to the false one, then I have committed such a crime. I wanted to steal it for myself, to be a thief of that which is my own, purchased with pain and lost with

pain ; but it happened differently—I was not to have it, in punishment for not having defended my rights more boldly. Oh ! and this cruel, pitiless man, who has robbed me of everything, even of this last short, desperate consolation—”

Her voice appeared to fail her. She covered her face with her white hands, and was silent. But the time when she might have deceived him was past.

“Where is the child ?” he asked, after a short pause, stepping close up to her.

She did not remove her hands from before her eyes.

“I sent it back to you. I saw that the innocent creature had been brought up in hatred toward her mother, and that I could not hope to win her young heart back to me again. What I felt—but enough ! What do you care for my sorrows ? I pressed the child to my breast for the last time, and then let her go from me forever. When you get home, you will find her there. This is the truth. And if I had to die this moment I could not say anything else.”

She drew herself up at these words ; her eyes glistened with moisture, her features assumed an expression of anxious emotion, and her gestures were hasty and ungraceful.

“Well ?” she queried. “Are you not yet satisfied ? Have I something still that your hate begrudges me, that you would like to tear from me ? Take it—take all I have—take even my miserable life, that you have spared me until now, for I see what you are aiming at when you say you want to put an end to this. Yes, an end to my woes, to my disappointed hopes, to my happiness and my honor—an end to this wretched creature, that wanders through the world like a leaf torn from a tree, finding

rest nowhere—nowhere until it sinks into the mud and rots there.”

She threw herself on the sofa, and burst into a flood of tears.

He knew these tears. He knew that she possessed the art of moving herself in order to move others. But still he felt a deep pity for this unhappy nature, which could not even in its truest grief weep truly.

“Lucie,” he said—it was the first time he had addressed her by her name—“you are quite right, you are unhappy and I am partly to blame for it. I ought to have been a wiser man, and never to have thought of making you my wife. We are of different blood; you are in your element when you are pretending to be something you are not. I—but why talk about it? We know it all—we ought to have known it then; it would have spared us much bitterness. And now, Lucie, you see I am not unjust; I share the blame between us, just as I have borne my good half of the misfortune. But shall it go on this way and make both of us wretched all our lives? I have written all this to you. Why didn’t you read my letters better? We should now understand one another, and should be able to conclude what still remains to be done in a more friendly spirit.”

“Your letters?” she said, suddenly drawing herself up and drying her tears. “I read them only too well. I know that in and between the lines there was but one thought: ‘I will be free!—free at any price!’ I knew, too, who it was who dictated this thought to you; and now, since I have made the personal acquaintance of this incomparable woman—no, without sarcasm, which would be but childish defiance for one in my situation—I understand perfectly that you would be willing to do anything

in order that you might throw yourself into such chains. But to suppose that I, with my share of our common misfortune, as you call it, will voluntarily step back and look on while you find happiness according to your heart's desire—oh! you are excellent egotists, you men!—but you should not be so *naïve* as to think it a crime if we, too, sometimes think a little about ourselves!”

His old aversion arose again as he listened to this well-calculated, passionate speech. But he forced himself to be quiet.

“I have never tried to conceal from you,” said he, “that I am now more desirous than ever before for an absolute separation, because I wish to enter into a new marriage. If you thought it was for your interest to hinder this, if you wished to prevent me from ever again becoming a happy man, then this would be comprehensible on your part, although it would betray but little pride. But you ought to know me better. You ought to know that I am terribly in earnest when I say my submission to the fate that binds us together is at an end. I can—I *shall* never consent to let the malicious defiance of a woman cheat myself and her whom I love of our happiness in life. I am determined to do *anything* which can set me free. Do you hear it? To do *anything*. And for that reason I say to you: name your price! I know very well that your desire to feel that I am in your power, and the triumph of seeing me drag a piece of the chain after me is dear to you. But even dearer things have their price. Name yours; I will buy off your hate and your malice, though to do it I had to work like a day-laborer from morning until late into the night.”

“I don't imagine that will be necessary. Your sweetheart is rich, I hear. But you are mistaken. I am not

covetous. Give me the child, and I will never have known the father."

"Woman!" he cried, his whole being lashed into fury by the trick which he immediately detected—"You are—"

But he controlled himself. He sank down a chair near the sofa, and said, in a tone as if he were communicating something of the greatest indifference to her:

"Very good. You remain untouched by words or prayers. But let me tell you: I am as determined to set myself free as you can possibly be to keep me forever in a state of wretched bondage. If you will consent to a legal separation, you shall never have occasion to complain of me. I will double what I have done for you heretofore; yes—I will guarantee that you shall not lose this part enjoyment of my income even by any second marriage you may be disposed to enter into. You smile and pretend to be incredulous. Let us play an honest game. You are young and beautiful; though I doubt whether you will ever find a man to whom your heart will go forth. You may easily find a man who will seduce your senses, and whose position will attract you, and then our account would be at an end. If you resist this just compromise—"

She looked at him again with all her childish innocence, with that smiling curiosity as though they had to do with a scene in a farce.

"Well—and then?" she asked.

"Then I will take every means in my power to ruin your life as you have ruined mine. I will pursue you with my hate, no matter whither you may flee, and dog your steps, do what you will to hinder! I know how you live, and that you have neglected no chance to console

yourself for the loss of a husband. I have cast you out of my heart so entirely that I did not feel the least shade of sorrow when you threw yourself away upon whomsoever pleased you. But that shall be otherwise now. I will put a spy on your track, whose only duty shall be to watch you every step and movement, and to furnish me what I have hitherto lacked : *proofs* that you are trampling my honor as well as my happiness under foot. Then I will openly step before the world and tear the mask from your smooth face. Then I will—”

“You would do better to spare yourself the trouble,” she interrupted, coldly. “Since you are so good as to warn me, you will easily understand that, even admitting I should feel any desire to be indiscreet, I should take care to guard myself against spies. So you would only throw away your money without gaining anything by it. For such weak proof of my guilt toward you as a glove, that very likely the doctor left lying in my chamber, and that an intelligent dog—*à propos!* I am really sorry that I was the innocent cause of the loss of your friend, though that keen judge of human nature did show as unconquerable an aversion toward me as his master. Some other end would undoubtedly have been preferred by you. At the same time, little as my wretched life may be worth to you, and easier as it would be for you to find a second wife than a second dog—”

“Woman !” he shrieked, driven furious by her impudent irony in this terrible hour. “Not another word, or—”

“Or ?”

She looked at him defiantly, as she rose and folded her arms.

“Or I will bring the matter to another end than you

ever dreamed of, and the carriage that you brought you here, you she-devil, laughing and mocking at me with your pretty paramour, shall to-morrow—”

He raised his fist as if he were about to let it fall like a hammer on her head. She returned his gaze without moving an eyelash.

“Murder me, if you have the heart to !” she said, coldly, with her lips curled in scorn. “The comedy in which a dog has played such a splendid *rôle* would then end most fittingly as a tragedy, which would be better, at all events, than a wretched reconciliation. As truly as I am innocent of your madness and fury, so truly do I say that a more undeserved disgrace was never heaped upon a helpless creature ; that happiness, honor, and future were never more ruthlessly—”

The door was thrown open. Felix, who had pushed back the listening woman, thinking that the time had come to prevent an act of violence, burst into the room and suddenly stood before the speaker. But scarcely had she cast a look upon him than, with a shrill scream that went through the very marrow of the men, she sank back, her arms as if paralyzed by a sudden cramp, her features distorted, and in a state that bore such unmistakable signs of truth that no thought of its being some new deception was possible. Before Jansen had had time to collect himself, the mother rushed in from the corridor and threw herself down before her insensible daughter, who lay on the sofa with staring, wide-open eyes, a vacant smile upon her lips, and hands hanging rigidly at her side with the fingers spread wide apart.

“You have killed her !” cried the old woman, trying to lift the body, which had half fallen to the ground, on to the cushions. “Help—save her—bring water, vinegar

—anything you have—Lucie—my poor Lucie—don't you hear me? It is I! My God! My God! Must it come to this!"

"It is a fainting-fit, nothing more!" Jansen's voice now broke in. "She has had such fits before, especially after great exertion on the stage. And to-day's scene—" his speech suddenly failed him. He had turned as he spoke toward Felix, who stood in the middle of the room, his eyes fixed immovably upon the figure of the insensible woman. It was as if the lightning-bolt that had struck her had grazed him too. Not a limb did he move, not a muscle stirred in his face; every drop of blood seemed to have left his veins.

"Felix! For God's sake what ails you? What is it? do you hear me, Felix?" cried Jansen, grasping his arm and pressing it tight.

Felix made a vain attempt to master himself again. But he could not withdraw his gaze from the woman, who lay there as if dead. He merely nodded a few times, as if to give a sign of life, and heaved a deep sigh. Then he said, bringing out each word separately: "So—that—is—your wife!"

"Felix!" cried Jansen, in a tone which betrayed a terrible suspicion. "Felix—speak—no—say nothing—come out—we—we are in the way here—"

"So that—is—his wife!" repeated the other, as if talking to himself. Suddenly he shook himself with a gesture of horror, broke loose from his friend, and rushed out of the room with such terrible haste as to cut off all chance for Jansen to detain him. They heard him, immediately afterward, plunge down the stairs and fling the door to behind him.

Jansen hurried to the window and threw it open.

"Felix," he shouted after him—"one word—just a single word!"

No sound came up from below. Only the wet snow drove in through the open window, upon the head and breast of this sore-burdened man. He did not notice it. He leaned against the window-sill to support himself, and stood for perhaps ten minutes deaf and blind to all that went on around him.

The old singer was trying, with continual moaning and laments, to bring her insensible daughter back to life. She had produced a little flask of some strong essence from her traveling-bag, and was bathing the young woman's colorless cheeks and temples with it. Jansen had turned his eyes upon the group, but he did so as if he took no notice of what was being done for the lifeless figure. Not until she had made a slight movement with her hand, that immediately dropped back again upon the cushion, did he seem to recollect himself. He stepped away from the window without closing it.

"Let the cold air come in," he said, in a low voice. "It is the best way to bring her to herself again. Put some snow on her forehead; she will open her eyes in a few moments. Tell her, then, that I have left the house, and—that I shall leave her in peace. Good-night!"

Her mother raised herself from her knees and sought to make some reply. But when she saw his face she was silent, and merely nodded timidly and servilely to all he said. She saw him go out of the room, and then hastened again to the aid of her daughter, who was now breathing heavily. She finally succeeded in raising her into a sitting position, but the pale head fell back again on the arm of the sofa. Then she ran to the window and brought a

few handfuls of the snow that lay on the sill outside. At length the insensible woman opened her eyes.

Her first, half-vacant gaze wandered over the room. After a while she became thoroughly aroused, and moved her lips.

"Where is he?" she murmured.

Just at that moment they heard the hoof-beats of a horse galloping off.

"Do you hear?" whispered the mother. "He is just riding away. He won't come again—he told me to wish you good-night, and he would leave you alone. Oh! these men—Oh! these men! Poor, poor Lucie!"

The pale woman appeared even now not quite to understand. Her features were still distorted in fear. She drew her mother nearer, and whispered: "And the other—was it really he, or was it—his ghost?"

"What do you mean, child? Are you out of your head? But only keep quiet—it's to be hoped we shall have a quiet night—oh! my God! What a scene, what a catastrophe!"

She seized the cup of wine, and drank it out. Lucie paid no attention to her.

A shudder passed over her. She closed her eyes anew. The convulsion which had seized upon her now lapsed into a violent sobbing, which her mother, who had seen her before in such a fit, allowed to take its course without making any attempt to waste further words in consolation.

CHAPTER XI.

WE must return to the morning of this day, in order to take up the threads out of which the dark web of these events was spun.

Julie, after having twice sought in vain for her friend at his studio, had found it impossible, in the anxious state of her heart, to stay quietly at home. She went to Irene's, for she had found Angelica, who had not closed her eyes all night, sunk in a deep sleep. She felt herself greatly drawn toward the *Fräulein*, though she had seen her yesterday for the first time ; all the more as Irene, too, was as little able as all the others to withstand the charm of Julie's character, and had attached herself to her with a warmth that appeared doubly great in contrast to her usual coy reserve. It had not been long, thanks to the freedom of the masquerade, before they stood on so familiar a footing as to call each other "Du ;" and the startling incident that drove Jansen away from the ball so early had broken down the last trace of reserve in the friendship between them. They had remained together for a few hours longer. Julie, to whom Jansen had disclosed in a single word the mystery of the strange mask, had made no secret of the matter to her friends, among whom Irene was now counted.

She herself, while taking the occurrence greatly to heart, saw at once how much nearer the final crisis it had brought her. But the thought that she must leave him to fight out alone the battle that could not be avoided, was torture to her.

She wanted at least to be near him, to know every

hour what he was doing, and, if it should be necessary, to be ready to restrain him from taking any violent steps. His withdrawing from her—although she knew that he had only done it to spare her—gave her great pain, and she felt now as if she knew for the first time how much she loved him.

In this mood she presented herself before Irene, who received her most tenderly. Felix, who had taken occasion to call as early as possible in the morning, had just taken his leave again, and the eyes and cheeks of the girl still glowed with the happiness of their reunion. The two friends had so much to confide to one another that they did not notice how the hours slipped by, and were very much surprised when the uncle, who, as a rule, never appeared before dinner-time, entered the room. Irene introduced him to Julie, and would not listen to such a thing as her going home to dinner.

The baron seconded her in her hospitable entreaties in his usual chivalrous manner ; though he seemed not to be in as good spirits as was usual when he found himself in the presence of a beautiful lady. During the meal, also, he was noticeably depressed and preoccupied, keeping remarkably silent for him, sighing a great deal, and complaining of old age, which must overtake even the youngest uncles at last. Then again he would try to laugh, or tell one of his old *bonmots* ; but he soon relapsed anew into a droll kind of melancholy, in which he railed at the uncertain lot of humanity and the mysteries of an irresponsible Providence.

When, after dinner, Irene was called out of the room by a chance caller whom she hoped quickly to get rid of, and the baron was left alone with Julie, he suddenly appeared to have gone fairly crazy. He sprang up, thrust

his hands through his thin hair, plucked at his beard, took a cigar—which he immediately laid down again—and finally drew up his chair close to the sofa, where Julie was seated.

“Fräulein Julie,” he said, with a deep sigh, “you will think it strange, but I can’t help myself ; will you hear me for ten minutes on a very serious matter, and then give me your advice and, if possible, your support ?”

She looked at him in amazement, but nodded kindly.

“A terribly bad story,” he continued ; “though, for that matter, a story that is not without a parallel in this imperfect world of ours, and one that ought not, by good rights, to break the heart of an old lion-hunter. But the worst of it is, it so happens that I can turn to no one for advice and aid, except to a young lady whose delightful acquaintance I made but an hour ago. Now, my honored Fräulein, if I only knew of some married woman, or some respectable elderly lady, in whom I had confidence—truly, I would spare you and myself the embarrassment of having to talk to you about the old sins of my youth. But in all this circle—all bachelors and single women—you will understand, my dear Fräulein—”

“Speak out boldly, Herr Baron ; I am thirty-one years old.”

“No, my dear Fräulein, the baptismal certificate has nothing to do with this question ; and, although I have the greatest respect for you—you are still far removed from the canonical age of a person inspiring respect. But I have learned, through my brother-in-arms Schnetz, how universally you are honored in Bohemia—pardon the expression, I mean in the so-called society of Paradise—and that it only needs a word from you to straighten out much more complicated affairs than this of mine.

“Perhaps you do not yet know—that is to say, you have undoubtedly known for a long time—for your talented friends do not generally keep secrets from one another—in short, I have a daughter—‘Have her while she is mine,’ as Polonius says—a daughter, of whose existence I had no suspicion until recently. Upon the discovery of my fathership I knocked at my heart, and waited to hear whether the so-called voice of Nature within would awaken. *Pas le moins du monde*. You will find this inhuman. But remember that I did not lead a worse life in this good town than was the fashion at that time, and that this adventure came half-way to meet me—I wish to throw no shadow either upon the girl or her parents—*enfin*, they were very cordial with me, and I, in return, possibly went too far. A few years afterward, I felt something like a gentle gnawing in my left side, where one is supposed to carry his conscience. As it did not subside, I wrote to this place in order to inquire, as a friend of the family, after the health of its different members. The letter was returned by the post, as the address could not be found.

“Now, looked at from a strictly moral point of view, I ought not to have felt, even after this, that I had justified myself. But what would you have? My contact with the king of the desert had somewhat hardened my skin, and the before-mentioned gnawing ceased. The girl had never been exactly what you would call beautiful, but was very attractive because of her freshness, her free nature, her merry laughter from a mouth of magnificent teeth. You know complexions of that kind have something especially dangerous about them for our weaker sex. To be brief, she had, in spite of all this, completely passed out of my memory until I saw her again to-day

in her daughter—pardon, in our daughter, I meant to say.”

“You sought out the girl? And how did the poor child receive you?”

“As badly as ever a child could receive its long-lost father. You can imagine, dear Fräulein, that it was no easy mission for me to fulfill. A man cuts such a wretched figure in the character of the repentant father, who, at the very first meeting with his grown-up daughter, is obliged to beg her pardon for having totally forgotten her. But there are sour apples into which one would rather bite than let himself be bitten by his conscience. I assumed a fatherly, venerable mien, and, when I entered the room where the girl was, and recognized in her her dead mother—as if the resemblance had been stolen from a mirror—I can assure you that at last the voice of Nature asserted itself. But scarcely had I introduced myself, with the necessary delicacy, to the unsuspecting child as one who had certain sacred, though long-neglected, rights to her childish affection, when the strange creature springs up like a little fury, and flies into the adjoining room. Now I ask you, my dear Fräulein, is a father who wishes to make good his faults a monster from whom one ought to run away? I stood there as if rooted to the spot; and, as soon as I recovered from my surprise, I did my best to conciliate my daughter through the bolted door. I spoke the kindest words to her, and promised her anything in the world if she would only be sensible and let me talk to her; and, truly, I must have succeeded in the end—the voice of Nature must finally have awakened even in her young bosom—when suddenly the old gentleman—my *quasi* father-in-law—entered the room. Would you believe it? this white-haired old man, instead of

coming to my aid with the wisdom of a grandfather, suddenly becomes as wild and unreasonable as a youth, says the most incredible things to my very face, and while I, out of respect for his gray hairs and lost in astonishment, am at a loss what to answer, he takes me *sans façon* by the arm and leads me to the door, which he slams after me like a clap of thunder."

The energy with which he had related all this seemed suddenly to have taken away his breath. He sprang up, threw open the window, and took a few deep draughts of the cold winter air ; then, burying his hands deep in the pockets of his short coat, he walked slowly back to where Julie was sitting.

"You must admit, my dear Fräulein," he said, "that this brutal reception was well calculated to silence the voice of Nature once more. This old—but no ! He is right ; if I had been in his place, and my son-in-law had taken twenty years to make up his mind to stammer out his *peccavi*, I should probably have been even less ceremonious, and have simply kicked the fellow down-stairs, even if I had done nothing worse to him. But still, as you can easily imagine, this encounter rather shattered me."

He threw himself into the chair again, sighed like a man in utter desperation, and ran his hands through his hair.

"And how can I help or advise you, Herr Baron ?" asked Julie, after a pause. "It seems to me there is nothing left for you to do but to write to Herr Schoepf and to your daughter, and tell them by letter what they would neither of them listen to in their first excitement."

"Pardon, my dear Fräulein, that wouldn't do much good. These two mad beings would not treat my letters

any better than they did their author. And yet, you will understand that I cannot rest content when my father-in-law and my daughter have turned me out-of-doors. I must atone for my old crime so far as such a thing is possible at this late day. For me, in my years and circumstances, to suddenly long for paternal joys, to receive this girl into my bachelor's quarters, and to introduce her to society as a young baroness—I, who have already had such a hard time with one grown-up daughter, by whom I am forced to let myself be ordered about—would be the height of the ridiculous: to say nothing of the fact that I doubt very much whether I should ever be able to tame this red-maned lioness. But, on the other hand, Father Schoepf, as he now calls himself, is no longer one of the youngest men in the world; and, aside from that, by no means a Cræsus. If the child stays with him, who knows but what she, too, will fall into bad hands, like her poor mother? And in case she should remain a good girl—you know, my dear Fräulein, that virtue as a sole dowry is not particularly in demand nowadays. I want, therefore, to secure for my daughter—whether she acknowledges me or not—a respectable marriage portion; not merely a dowry—it must be known that Fräulein Schoepf possesses in her own right so and so much property. Now, you see, my dear Fräulein, only such a soft and winning voice as yours can succeed in persuading Father Schoepf to consent to such an arrangement, which is so greatly for the interest of the child. Now, if I should send Schnetz to him, he would, if he had to deal with a man, fire up about his ridiculous manly honor, and the end of the story would be that Schnetz would likewise be shown the door. But you, if you will only consent—and why shouldn't you consent?—may even succeed in the end in inspiring this

wild creature, my own flesh and blood, with some human emotion ; so that she will feel for her papa, who really is no monster—but stop ! the visit in the next room is over. Not a word of this to Irene. Promise me this. May I depend on you ? ”

He reached her both his hands across the table with such a true-hearted and, at the same time, comically-crushed manner, that she did not hesitate for a moment to close the bargain. In a second his mood seemed to have gone through a complete transformation. He sprang up, bent over her hand, which he eagerly kissed, and began to hum a tune and to light a cigar, talking all the while about the masked ball of the night before. His niece, when she entered again, laughingly asked what magic charm her beautiful friend had been using in her absence, to dispel so completely her dear uncle’s melancholy mood.

Julie smiled and answered that people ought not to laugh at the secrets of magic, and the baron acted as though nothing at all had happened. Then the two friends took leave of one another. Julie was anxious to see Jansen again, whom she confidently hoped to find in his studio at this hour. But on the stairs, to which the baron escorted her, she whispered to him :

“Why don’t you want to let Irene into the secret ? Unless I am very much mistaken, she already knows the first half ; you owe it to her to tell her the other half, which truly does you honor.”

“Do you think so ? ” answered the baron. “Irene have a suspicion ? Good God, these young girls nowadays ! One takes great credit to one’s self for the profound innocence and ignorance in which one has brought them up, and they are wiser than we ourselves ! Well,

then, in Heaven's name ! one sour apple more ; my teeth are yet on edge from the first one."

He kissed Julie's hand once more and returned, sighing, to his niece.

CHAPTER XII.

JULIE went slowly and thoughtfully down the stairs. The moment she was alone, all in which she had just taken part sank into the background before the one thought how it fared with her friend, how he had passed the day, and what might have occurred between him and his wife, who held his fate in her hands. She reproached herself for having let her visit detain her so long. It is true he did not generally come until evening. But what if he had sought her out earlier to-day ?—what if he had had some news to give her, or had needed her advice or consent ? A cold shudder passed over her at the dreadful thought !

As if to make up for lost time, she hastened down the remaining steps. But, upon reaching the landing of the first floor, she involuntarily stopped. A very strange kind of music issued from one of the neighboring doors. This was Nelida's *salon* ; the waiter who had taken her to Irene had told her so. The piano within, which only skillful hands were generally allowed to touch, seemed to have fallen into the hands of a maniac, who cared more for making noise than music, or who was trying to test the instrument's power of resistance.

But, rising above all this stormy *charivari* of the keys, what noise was that ? Did her ears deceive her, or did she really hear a child's voice that pierced to her very

heart? Greatly excited, she advanced a few steps toward the nearest door; now she heard it more plainly—the sobbing of a child, that ceased for a moment only to begin again immediately afterward. Was it possible? Did she know that voice? She approached her ear to the door and discovered that the crying child must be in one of the side rooms, to which there was no separate entrance from the corridor. A few seconds more and the last doubt vanished. Without taking time for reflection, without knocking, she opened the door and stepped into the narrow hall between Nelida's *salon* and bedroom.

The doors of both the adjoining rooms stood half open. In the *salon* sat Stephanopulos before the piano, improvising like a madman with the most utter disregard of harmony, for he had been his own teacher on the piano. He did not notice Julie, but went on abusing the keys. It was not clear whether he was doing this in order to drown the noise of the crying, or to divert the distressed child's thoughts. For through the other door Julie now unmistakably heard the sobbing of little Frances, and the voice of a woman trying to soothe and comfort her. But before she had time to enter, an elderly lady, in hat and shawl, appeared on the threshold.

"Is it you, Nanette?" cried the old singer. "Is the carriage ready? Are the trunks strapped on? It's high time. The child— Good God!—what is this? You here?"

Julie did not give her time to slam the door and bolt it. She hastily pushed past the astonished woman, and entered the sleeping-chamber.

She was received with a cry of fright. Before a table, on which were piled all sorts of presents, flowers, cakes, and toys, as if for a birthday celebration, stood the child,

a big doll in one arm and a paper of candy in the other, but weeping as bitterly all the while as if these presents had been given her as a punishment. A woman, still young but past her first youth, knelt on the carpet beside her, her soft face bent down over the curly head of the child, apparently doing all in her power to quiet the little creature. But now she sprang to her feet and stared at Julie as if she had been a ghost.

The countess lay stretched out on a sofa, in the back part of the room, holding in her hand a newspaper, that fell into her lap when she suddenly became aware of this unexpected caller, who was now standing in the middle of the chamber.

The next moment the child let everything it had in its arms fall on the carpet, and, uttering a loud cry of joy, rushed into Julie's arms.

"Have you come at last, my dear, beautiful mamma? What made you come so late? I was so frightened here all alone! Are we really going now to Auntie Angelica? Or will you take me to papa?"

She clung fast to her protectress, who found it hard to quiet her. Her little face was wet with tears, and she trembled in every limb.

The countess raised herself upon her couch.

"To what do I owe this honor, Fräulein?" she said, in a trembling voice.

Julie released herself from the child's arms, and looked the questioner calmly in the face.

"I ought to excuse myself, countess," she said, "for coming here unannounced. However, the manner in which I am received relieves me from this formal courtesy. In passing by outside I heard a child crying, and recognized to my amazement and alarm Frances's voice. Her foster-

mother and her father, who evidently do not know where the child is, will be alarmed about her. Pardon me if I take my leave with as little formality as I came. Come, Frances, let us go. What have you done with your hat and little cloak?"

She had had difficulty in uttering the first words, she was so agitated by her indignation. But the sound of her own voice gave her back her self-control. She felt herself, all at once, to be perfectly at ease and a match for all hostility.

The piano-playing had suddenly ceased, and in the room itself the stillness of death ensued, broken only by little Frances, who ran to the lounge where her wraps were lying.

The young woman took a step toward Julie. Her face, but slightly flushed, appeared quite composed, and neither hate nor fear spoke from her eyes.

"I must introduce myself to you, *Fräulein*," she said, with her soft voice. "I am Frau Lucie Jansen, the mother of this dear child. From this you will understand—"

"Is that true, mamma Julie?" the child interrupted. "Is the woman really papa's wife, as she says? But papa hasn't any wife; he had one once, but she is dead this long time, and I haven't any other mother but my good foster-mother and my beautiful mamma Julie. I don't want to have any other mother, and I don't want any presents from her—I only want to go away! You must take me away. I—I—"

She began to cry again, dropped her little cloak, and running back to Julie threw her arms round her neck and sobbed bitterly.

"Be quiet, Frances dear," Julie whispered to her. "We will go away to your father. You can ask him; he

will tell you all that I can't tell you here. Come, be a good child—be my brave, sensible little Frances—”

“I must confess that this is the most extraordinary proceeding I ever heard of,” said the countess, in a loud but perfectly indifferent voice. “Such language from such a mouth—*une femme entretenue qui ne rougit pas de vouloir enlever un enfant à la mère légitime*—”

“Countess,” interrupted Julie, likewise raising her voice, “you said that in French ; that relieves me from the disagreeable necessity of giving you the plain German answer that such an insult deserves—an insult which you yourself know to be false. Besides, I haven’t to do with you, although you have permitted your rooms to be the theatre of this intrigue. I merely have to reply to the mother that I have a right to this child, a right that was voluntarily given me by its father, and that I certainly regret having to make use of this right in opposition to one who might have appealed to a holy right of Nature, had she not of her own accord relinquished it. You wished to steal the child from the father, and I, the betrothed of your former husband, fulfill only my motherly duty when I resist such a robbery. Get ready, Frances ; we have nothing more to do here.”

The face of the young woman had grown deadly pale, her soft eyes flashed fire, and she ground her little white teeth so that the sound was plainly audible.

“You allow yourself,” she said, “to judge of circumstances you do not understand, that have never been told you except in a one-sided and distorted way. I have never renounced my natural right to call this child mine ; I have merely been obliged to yield for a time to force, and I have always secretly hoped that time would come to my aid, that the father of my darling would acknowl-

edge the deep wrong he had done me, and that the separation would tend to soften him. And who knows that this would not have come about had you not stepped in between us? Now, to be sure, that things have gone so far, there is no longer any hope of settling the matter amicably. If I would have back what belongs to me by sacred right, I was obliged to steal it as if it had been the property of another; and how hard it will be for me to make it mine again I have already discovered to my sorrow, for they have estranged the heart of this poor, motherless creature from its most natural home. Nevertheless, I will not cease to proclaim my right to the child and to its father. Why do you stand in the way of a deeply-injured woman, a robbed mother? Don't pretend you really care anything about becoming my successor to the child, as you have become to the father. Skillfully as you now play the *rôle* of the tender mother, in your heart you will be grateful to me if I relieve you of this burdensome duty; and he too, the most fickle of men—believe me, if he only had a reasonable pretext before the world, he would console himself in your possession, and would rejoice that I had been so good-natured as to have removed from his sight, without his express consent, the remembrance of an old guilt!"

She made a movement as if to draw the child to her arms, but it only clung the tighter to Julie.

"Take me away," it whispered to her, in a low voice. "Let us go away—to dear papa—I don't want to go to that woman again."

Julie stroked the little head, and pressed it to her side. She covered the child's ears so thickly with its soft hair that not a word of all this sad and bitter talk could reach its young soul.

“Thank you,” she said, “you have drawn a thorn from my conscience by these disclosures. ‘Perhaps, after all, he did her an injustice,’ I said to myself. ‘Perhaps he was too violent, too hasty; and even if she has been guilty of a great sin toward him, is it not punishment enough that the mother has been deprived of her child for so many years? And can I answer for it to this child for having forever destroyed all hopes of a reconciliation between her parents?’ This often gave me some misgivings; but I candidly confess to you, from this day forth my conscience will be easy on that score. No matter what you may say in order to palliate what you have done, you cannot have the only real justification, a true and genuine love for your child; if you did, how could you entertain the thought that I would be glad to get rid of her? Such a thing could only be said and believed by a woman who let five years pass away without once trying to see, at any cost, the child she had borne; and who never even waited in the streets that she might have a chance to press it to her heart and kiss it once again. Such a thought could only be entertained by the woman who believed that the father of this child was capable of sacrificing it to his new-born happiness, and would look on with indifference while it pined and languished for want of a true mother’s love. And you reproach me for having plighted my troth to this man who never belonged to you, for you never understood him, and never knew his worth, his nobility, and his greatness. You may do your best to destroy his happiness and to undermine his peace by your petty acts; in *this* plot you have failed, and, for the future, we shall take better care of ourselves and of the child. You have given us warning!”

She did not wait for an answer to these words, which

she poured forth in ever-increasing excitement. Before the women could collect their thoughts and interfere she had seized little Frances's hat and cloak, had put them on the child, and had borne her away in her arms.

The moment she had gone, Stephanopulos entered the room with a nervous laugh.

"*Quelle femme!*" he said. "*Elle nous a joliment mis dedans.*"

"Angelos," commanded the countess, "go after her! She is perfectly capable of seating herself in the carriage that stands before the door and riding home in it. We need the carriage. There is no time to lose."

"But, my dear countess, I don't understand. What is the use now?—and you, madame—"

He approached Lucie, who had sunk down on the lounge in speechless stupor.

"Don't be a child, Angelos!" said the countess, excitedly. "What is there about it you don't understand? The game is lost! To be sure, if it had only been played somewhat better—"

"What would you have?" retorted the young woman, in an irritated tone. "Didn't we do everything you advised us? If it hadn't been for this horrible incident, everything would have turned out well. I should have carried off the child, and by doing so have proved to the world that I knew myself to be innocent, that I would not quietly submit to everything they chose to put upon me, and that I had the courage to defend myself against the incredible insults—"

"Calm yourself, my good friend!" said Nelida, decisively. "Why should we go on with a comedy that deludes no one? Enough, *le coup a manqué!* We must take care that the recoil does not strike you. The jour-

ney which you intended to take with the child you must take alone. Or, don't you think that your husband will do all in his power to make you suffer for the mere attempt, if he hears—"

"He will rage like a tiger!" cried Stephanopulos. "I once saw a little specimen of his rage when a hostler whipped a cart-horse until the animal fell to the ground. He sprang upon the man and would have torn him in pieces if we had not interfered. The countess is right—you must fly; of course I will accompany you, until you are in safety."

The old singer, who had kept herself in the background during the whole scene, now stepped forward and zealously joined in urging flight. Lucie let her have her way without moving a finger.

In ten minutes all was ready; the carriage rolled away from the house, and Nelida dragged herself to the window and stood gazing after them.

The young Greek leaned out of the carriage, and nodded a last farewell.

"*Bon voyage!*" said the solitary woman, carelessly returning the salutation. "So this episode is played out, too! Poor creature—totally without *élan* in good or bad. And yet I pity her. To have been the wife of this man, and now to have sunk so low as to have to be glad when an insignificant young— And I?—what is the end of it all? To grow old and ugly—always older and uglier—the last spark dies out, and finally the heart is buried beneath the ashes of its own passions. A hell on earth! I would give the rest of my life to be, just for a single year, as beautiful as this Julie—to be so loved, and by *this man!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

HOLDING the delicate little figure clasped close to her breast, Julie had hurriedly carried the child down the stairs. She felt as if she were in an intoxication of indignation, contempt, defiance, and triumph ; her lips, which touched the child's locks, trembled, and her heart beat so that she could hardly draw her breath. It was not until she had reached the lower hall, and saw the eyes of the hotel people fixed upon her, that she recovered her composure again, and letting little Frances slide down on her feet she fastened on her hat and cloak for her. The child had not spoken a word thus far. But now, when she saw the traveling carriage standing packed and ready before the door, she clung tight to Julie again, begging in a low voice that they should hurry away. She seemed to fear that they would stop her even now, and drive off with her in the carriage. Julie quieted her, ordered a drosky to be called, and told the driver to drive home.

They sat nestled close up to one another, and were silent. Once only the child turned to her protectress and asked :

"Will she travel off without me now?"

"Don't think any more about it," Julie answered, kissing her on the forehead. "You are with me now. Are you happy?"

The child nodded and stroked Julie's hand. But one could see from her eyes that her thoughts were still busy with what had passed.

When they reached home Julie found a note, which
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Fridolin had brought, containing a few lines from Jansen, written in pencil. He hoped he should be able to see her before the day was over, and she mustn't feel any anxiety about him. This made her very happy. She decided to let him find his child with her, particularly as the weather was raw and it did not seem advisable to put Frances, who was feverish from weeping, into a damp drosky again. So she sent old Erich to the foster-mother, with a note in which she asked permission to keep the little one with her overnight. She wanted to do this, she said, in order to surprise the father; and having dispatched the letter she enjoyed herself playing with the child, whose affections she now felt as if she had thoroughly won and deserved. She made a cup of chocolate, and looked on while it eagerly drank it; for it had not touched the sweetmeats Lucie had given it.

She acknowledged such an evident interposition of friendly powers in all that she had just passed through, and the good gods seemed to have taken the part of her love and hopes so earnestly, that she had no doubt but what the remaining difficulties would be also satisfactorily solved.

In this opinion she was shaken, though only for a moment, by the news Frances's foster-mother brought. That good woman was still full of the fright that had been caused by the supposed abduction of the child, and had no sooner received Erich's message than she set out to convince herself with her own eyes that at all events the worst had not happened, and that little Frances was in safety. The excitement of the last few hours, the self-reproach she felt, and the thought of the consequences that might follow, had so worked upon her that, at the sight of the child smiling a welcome to her, she burst

into tears and could with difficulty be quieted. As for the permission, she said she no longer had any right whatsoever to give such a thing, now that it appeared that the child had not been safe from such an invasion under her own roof ; and if the father should withdraw all his confidence from her she felt she would have no right to complain.

"Let me have her just for this night," Julie begged. "I have a presentiment that Jansen must return to-night, and then he will be so rejoiced to find us together. After to-morrow, you shall once more enjoy your mother's privileges without stint, until I take your place with still better rights."

But her presentiment deceived her.

The child was put to bed early, and, with its head resting on Julie's pillow, had long since dropped off to sleep in the midst of a loving chat with its "beautiful mamma." Julie sat and listened to the storm, starting to her feet every time she heard a man's step approach the house. But the hours slipped by, and she remained alone. At last, about midnight, she gave up all hope. She dismissed her old servant, noiselessly undressed herself, and lay down on the bed by the side of the sleeping child. It was long before she closed her eyes.

When she awoke next morning her little bedfellow soon roused herself, and was very much surprised not to find herself in her accustomed place. The preceding day, with its adventures, only floated before her like a confused dream. She had a strange dislike to asking Julie how it had all come about, but allowed Julie to dress her, amid much petting and caressing, and to carry her home. Julie herself was depressed, and felt her confidence in the helping powers of fate much shaken. She resigned little

Frances to the foster-mother, and then immediately started for the studio.

The weather had cleared, and a warm though pale winter sun shone down upon the streets, covered with a thin layer of snow. The long walk did Julie good. When she finally reached the house, her cheeks were glowing, her blood was quickened, and her spirits had recovered their former confidence. She was, therefore, all the more alarmed to find four well-known figures in the courtyard, all of whom greeted her with a look of profound distress—Angelica, Rosenbusch, Kohle, and Fridolin, the janitor. They were standing in a group, and appeared to be eagerly discussing something, when Julie's sudden arrival frightened them apart.

"What has happened?" she cried to them. "Has he returned? For God's sake, what has happened?"

"Dear Fräulein," said Rosenbusch, who was the first to stammer out an answer, "we know as little as you what has happened; but he has returned, and last night too, and not very late either; he gave back his horse to the stable-keeper himself; or, at all events, when I inquired about it early this morning, the two animals stood in the stalls, but the hostlers knew nothing of their riders. 'Well,' thought I to myself, 'that affair passed off better than we had a right to expect,' and hurried over here. But when I asked Fridolin, he knew nothing except that the 'professor' must have returned, for he had not been able to open the door of the studio; the key was inside, and he had received no answer to his knocking. In the mean time, as the sun rose quite high, I thought he certainly must have slept enough; and I also knocked and gave him good-morning through the keyhole. No answer. The marble-cutters, who wanted to get into the

saints' studio, found the door locked likewise ; and after waiting for a time, they went away again. As time went on I began to think there was something very odd about it all. So I climbed up to the window on the garden side, and looked into the ateliers—first into his own. Everything there was in the best of order, only there was no trace of him. So I climbed down again, and then up to the other window—well, in there things looked oddly enough. Just picture it, Fräulein : all his worthy saints, with the exception of the models which he had made himself, were smashed into fragments ; and what was worse than all, in the midst of all this wreck I saw him—our poor friend—stretched out on the floor as if he were lying on the softest mattress ; don't be frightened, Fräulein, he is alive and conscious, but so tired apparently that he cannot even rouse himself enough to go into the other studio and lie down on the sofa. For, upon my beating a most devilish reveille upon the closed window and shouting out his name, he raised himself half up, made a motion with his hand for me to leave him in peace, and then sank back again on the heap of fragments, with nothing under his head but a corner of his cloak."

He broke off, as he saw Julie turn away hastily and hasten toward the building. Angelica was about to follow, but she made a sign that she wanted to go alone, and hurriedly entered the house.

Inside, she listened for a moment at the door of the "saint-factory ;" as all was quiet she knocked with a trembling hand and called Jansen's name. Immediately after the door opened, and he stood before her.

He was wrapped in his cloak, his hair hung disheveled about his temples, all the blood seemed to have left his

face, and his eyes had neither a wild nor a sad look ; but their tired, wandering gaze pained Julie more than the most passionate excitement.

"It is you !" he said. "You are a little too early for me. I, as you see—won't you come in ? To be sure, it doesn't look very inviting here—I have been clearing out a little, and because I did it in the dark—"

She had to exert all her strength in order to cast an apparently composed look around the room.

"What harm have these innocent figures done you ?" she asked, closing the door behind her.

"Innocent?—ha, ha ! They only pretend to be so. In reality they all have the devil in them, in spite of their saints' halo. Not a single one of them is really innocent. I ought to know that best, for I made them. And I tell you, the reflection from the snow outside made it bright enough for me to see the lie grinning from these stupid faces. So I made an end of it and smashed them all to bits—another lie wiped out of the world. I have been doing things by halves long enough ; the other half always avenges itself. Now I feel better again, especially since I have seen you."

He pressed her hand : his voice sounded hoarse and strained ; his eyes were bloodshot. She had to forcibly keep down her tears, as she stepped over the wreck upon the floor.

"I am glad that it all lies behind you now," she said. "I can feel with you how it must pain you to make something in which your whole heart is not interested. But come away from this destruction. We will make a fire in the studio, and talk. Did you know that little Frances spent the night with me ? The darling child ! It was

hard for me to give her back to the foster-mother. But then it won't be for long now."

He made no answer, but submissively allowed himself to be led away without raising his eyes from the ground. While she kindled the fire, he sat on the sofa, his arms hanging down between his knees, and began to hum a tune as if in accompaniment to the music made by the crackling flames in the iron stove. He did not appear to notice that she had again stepped to his side. It was not until she bent over, threw her arms round his neck, and, with the tears streaming down her face, kissed him again and again, that he became conscious of what was passing; and, even then, he seemed to see everything as if through a mist.

"What are you crying for?" he asked, in surprise. "Am I not quite cheerful and sensible? You, surely, are not afraid of me? Don't be afraid, the worst is over. Last night, it is true, if any one had said to me, 'Stamp with your foot on the ground and the whole world will fall in ruins and bury you and all that is good and beautiful,' I believe I would have done it. Well, those poor innocents there had to bear the brunt of my fury; and now a little child might lead me by a string."

"Won't you tell me how it all happened?"

"What would be the use? It is vile. It's bad enough that two persons know of it besides myself. Besides, it can't be changed. Don't you know that you must never draw the iron out of the wound unless you want the man to bleed to death? What time is it? Is it evening or morning? I believe I am hungry. The animal in man is immortal, and outlives all the nobler impulses. Pardon me for talking so. The words fall from my lips; I cannot hold them back."

"I will go up to Angelica's room—she always has a little supply on hand—or shall we go to my house?"

"No matter about it. I feel a disgust for all food. Hunger and disgust at the same time—a fine outlook for life! But it's no wonder. When one has nourished himself with something that appears perfectly innocent, and suddenly discovers that it has been gathered from the vilest refuse—"

She seated herself beside him on the sofa, and laid her arm on his shoulder; but he seemed to be quite unmoved by her touch, though usually her slightest caress would fairly intoxicate him.

"You must tell me all!" she whispered, stroking his rigid face, while the tears rolled down her cheeks. "Are we not one? Is not your life mine, just as everything I am and have belongs to you? And yet you would keep something from me, because it might give me pain! I demand my full half of your pain, or I shall begin to doubt whether I was ever anything more to you than a living picture in which your eyes found pleasure."

He slowly shook his head. "I must make an end of that, too," he said, as if to himself. "I must have done with this half-way work. But that pains me more; and it is not the beautiful image that must be dashed to pieces, but he who moulded it out of clay. Ha, ha! As if it did not follow that everything which comes from the earth must go back to the earth again. A fine thought that, a truly charming prospect—ha, ha!"

"Speak sensibly, dearest! Now I can't understand a word."

"Well, then, to speak sensibly, I must go away—the sooner the better. Do you understand what that means? I, myself—to tell the truth—I don't quite understand it

yet; but that comes from my weariness. As soon as I have had a good sleep—”

“Go away! And why go away? And where to?”

“Why? You ask strange questions, dearest. As if we ever knew why we live, why the sun shines on us to-day and to-morrow the storm rages. And where it whirls us to—what matters it? Do you believe that any spot will be dearer to me than another where I have to do without you?”

“Without me? You are raving! O my God!—the—but I am crazy to let myself be frightened by anything so—so impossible!”

“Yes, yes!” he said, in a hollow voice, and with a bitter smile; “impossible. So many things seem to us, until those two great magicians, chance and crime, complete the trick, and make the impossible only too actual. I candidly confess to you that, when my sound reason leaves me for a moment, I also hear a voice within me crying: ‘It is impossible!’ And yet it must be so—and we can do nothing but kick our bleeding heels against the thorns of fate. What is the matter with you all at once? You have let your arm fall from my shoulder. Are you angry with me, poor woman, because I am a beaten man? Say yourself what is there left for us to do but to renounce and despair? Because I am so quiet with it all, do you think I have grown cold overnight? But it is only, as I said, because all strength has left me; even the strength to feel the deadliest pains. Let me sleep an hour, and then you will be satisfied with the pitiable way in which my heart will behave.”

He attempted to rise, but sank back again on his couch. Just at this moment a knock was heard. They

heard Angelica's voice on the landing-place outside: "Only a word, Julie; I have something to give you."

Julie arose, and opened the door. Immediately she returned to Jansen, who sat there perfectly indifferent, bearing a letter in her hand.

"It is for you," she said. "It is Felix's handwriting. Will you open it? I think you had better first go home with me and rest awhile, and try to eat and sleep. You must have pretty well talked over everything last night, so that it is hardly probable the letter can contain anything new or important."

"Do you think so?" he said, in a peculiar tone. "Because we were friends, I suppose you think that each of us must know all about the other. Well, then, my poor darling, open the letter yourself, and you will get at the tricks by which chance has made the impossible possible. Read it, read it whatever it is, it can't tell me anything more that is worth knowing!"

Breathlessly, she tore open the envelope; and standing at the window, leaning her trembling figure against the sill for support, she read the following lines.

CHAPTER XIV.

FELIX TO JANSEN.

"We parted so strangely, yesterday. Under the first shock of the blow I ran away as if I had been blind and mad. As if one could escape the mockery of hell in one's own breast! When I realized this, I turned back. I should have been glad to have surrendered myself to you—unconditionally—that very night. But you had already

ridden away, and the others had chosen to leave the house and hurry off by the night train. Thus I am left here undisturbed, to come to my senses, and to write you a long letter—to which I can expect no answer.

“After all, what could you say to me? For we are parted again—we are separated, after all. And the case is so terribly clear, that it makes all explanation and discussion superfluous. Why, then, should I waste so much paper? and even go out of my way to give an explanation at which one scarcely knows whether he ought to laugh or weep?

“But I owe it to you—no, not to you; for, at bottom, I did not sin against you but against myself; and my confession, about which you will perhaps care little, is merely a relief to that self, which I hope you will grant me for the sake of our old friendship. I will try to be as brief as possible.

“You know how, just before my father died, I was sent to a watering-place; and how I twice passed through the city where you lived—the first time on my journey there, by way of Holland, where I had business to attend to; and then again on my return, when I was spurred on to the wildest haste by the news from home, and wanted to spare us both a mere shake of the hand between the steamer and the railroad, while in such a mood. In the interval between these two visits, you had married and become a father. I looked forward to becoming acquainted with your wife and child, but for that very reason I put off our meeting until a brighter time, and passed through Hamburg without suspecting——

“Still, in spite of all my anxiety as to how I should find my father, a painful recollection followed me. You know I had never been very straitlaced in my way of life

or my adventures, and scarcely ever had paid for this frivolity even with remorse. I was always conscientious toward the conscientious, and unscrupulous toward the unscrupulous. I had never consciously or deliberately tried to disturb the peace of a single soul, and was above the level of the conventional *bonnes fortunes* one meets in his every-day path.

"But, not to make myself out better than I was, certain temptations were always powerful with me simply because of their adventurousness; and a decidedly insignificant Juliet might have seduced me into playing the Romeo, if the rope-ladder to her balcony had been a particularly breakneck one.

"Now, just before I came to Heligoland, various matters had united to put me in a bad humor; and, besides, my nerves were unstrung by wrong medical treatment, feverish work, and night-watching; and I troubled myself little more about the society of the resort than I did about the mussels and sea-weed on the beach.

"In an instant all this was changed. A stranger suddenly made her appearance—a young woman—who soon became the puzzle and the talk of the whole island. The stranger's list recorded her as Madame Jackson, of Cherbourg. She was without an escort, had rented rooms in a fisher's hut standing quite alone, and appeared to make it her chief aim to set all male and female tongues in motion by the oddity of her behavior.

"She appeared on the beach very early in the morning in a toilet that awakened the envy of all the ladies. It was not the costliness of the materials or of the ornaments, but the singular grace with which she knew how to wear and move in the plainest shawls and veils. Then, besides, her face could not fail to attract the notice of

everybody, if only by its unusual contrasts. Her hair had a reddish-gold color, that literally shone in the sun when she let it fall freely down her shoulders ; two delicate dark eyebrows curved over the softest blue eyes, that looked out upon the world as if they hadn't the slightest suspicion of the stir they were causing. A little black point-lace veil hung down over her forehead—however, I needn't describe her to you.

"Of course, the women insisted that her golden hair was dyed, and her eyebrows painted. Such a play of colors did not exist in Nature. But the men did not find it the less charming on that account.

"An old Englishman was the first who ventured to address her, as a countrywoman of his. She replied in the best of English, but so shortly, that this unsuccessful attempt frightened away all others of the same kind.

"However, she herself soon appeared to tire of the isolation which she had maintained for the first few days. She made advances to a Mecklenburg lady, who had accompanied her sick daughter to the seashore, and, under the pretext of sympathy, she struck up an acquaintance with her which she let drop again after a short time, evidently because it bored her. As she also spoke German, though with an English accent, several country noblemen from the Mark, who had fallen dead in love with her, ventured to speak to her. She treated them with cool condescension, and it was not long before a regular court had gathered about her, in which several young people with whom I had heretofore associated allowed themselves to be enrolled.

"They told me about the moods and whims of their lady, who was made up of ice and fire ; of childish inno-

cence and the most refined coquetry ; of sentiment and wild audacity.

“The English coldness, and the soft, dove-like smile, with which she appeared in society, and the half-bored and half-ironical manner in which she accepted the homage of her admirers, were merely a mask. When she was alone with a person, an entirely different and much more adventurous character made its appearance ; a seductive, melancholy, and yielding softness — which, however, changed at once into the harshest coldness the moment he who had been encouraged by it began to grow warmer, and attempted to seize the whole hand by means of the little finger she held out to him. She would thrust back any such deluded being into his place with the most cutting irony, and from that moment would treat him with pitiless disfavor, without quite setting him free.

“Several of my acquaintances had discovered this to their cost. They gave me such minute accounts of their disgraceful defeats that I recognized in this woman a type of those perfectly cold-blooded coquettes who are—to the credit of the sex be it said—but rarely met with. The aversion I had felt toward this sea-monster, from the very first moment I had set eyes on her, was only the more confirmed by this ; but, at the same time, the thought sprang up in me that it might be a good work, a meritorious act toward the whole male population of the island, if I could succeed in catching this fisher of men in her own net.

“This purpose immediately became a fixed idea with me, actually as if my own honor were staked on the result. As I knew that I was absolutely proof against her charm, I proceeded to its execution without the faintest scruples. She had long regarded my reserve with amaze-

ment and anger ; the consequence was that nothing was easier for me than to take advantage of the first chance meeting I could bring about, to conquer a place among her intimates.

"I will refrain from inflicting upon you, scene for scene, an account of the wretched comedy that now began. The fact that I had to do with a skillful opponent aroused my ambition, and stung into life all the dormant obstinacy of my character, so that, at the end of a week—for she, too, staked all her pride upon finally seeing me at her feet like all the others—we two stood confronting each other almost alone ; her former circle of admirers had withdrawn discomfited.

"The great aim of my tactics was to represent myself as thoroughly *blasé* and unsusceptible, and to act as though I found the great charm of my intercourse with her merely in the fact that I had at last encountered a kindred nature, who, like me, had long since disclaimed, as a ridiculous delusion, the possession of any warmth of feeling. She accepted the *rôle* I assigned to her, but it never occurred to her for a moment to cease trying to tempt me out of mine. Occasional human emotions, into which I now and then allowed my calumniated heart to be betrayed, gave her some right to hope ; and the freedom of a watering-place afforded a hundred opportunities for putting me to the test.

"Well, it turned out just as it could not help turning out. One evening we came home from a stormy sailing excursion, which had not been entirely free from danger, half wet through and hungry. The return trip had been delayed from the fact of the skipper's having been obliged to stop in the midst of the storm, to mend, as well as he could under the circumstances, a leak in his boat ; the

consequence was it was late when we reached her fisher's cottage. She herself seemed to have forgotten her enforced *rôle* for the moment, and appeared to have no other end in view than to refresh and warm me before dismissing me to my lodgings. While she went into her chamber and put on some dry garments, I was forced to stay in the front-room, which was itself little more than a small bedroom, and exchange my coat—which had been soaked through and through with the salt water—for a Turkish jacket she had selected from her wardrobe; and soon, the tea steaming on the table, the warmth of the fire—which was very grateful in spite of its being early fall—and, above all, the extraordinary manner in which we were dressed after the dangers we had escaped, threw us both into a reckless and merry mood such as I had never before experienced in her presence.

"But even now I was still very far from feeling anything like love, not even as much as I had sometimes felt in the most trivial of my adventures. In the midst of my sportive chat with this woman I felt at the bottom of my soul an unconquerable aversion toward her, indeed something almost like a secret horror of her—as if a presentiment were warning me who it was that sat opposite me. But a demon drove me on to play to the end of the *rôle* I had once undertaken, for, as I persuaded myself—mad fool that I was!—my *honor* was at stake! Never was a victory more dearly bought, never did a man who thought to triumph feel himself so lost and degraded in his own sight as I did in that hellish hour. Had I strangled this woman in a fit of blind passion, it would not have so degraded me as this impudent comedy.

"And the wretched woman felt that I could not, do what I would, carry out the *rôle* of a favored lover;—the

suspicion dawned upon her in what light I must appear to myself and she to me. Horror, hate, and resentment toward me, and perhaps also shame and self-reproach, suddenly overpowered her with such force that she burst into a storm of tears; and when I, in compassionate surprise, attempted to approach her, she thrust me back with a violent gesture of disgust, and immediately afterward fell into a fainting-fit that seemed almost like death.

“That night I passed probably the most painful hours of my life, in awkward attempts to bring her back to consciousness. I did not dare to call for assistance for fear of compromising her. When at last she opened her eyes again I saw that the most forbearing thing I could do would be to leave her without saying farewell.

“I found no sleep that night. I cursed the hour in which I had seen this woman, my childish defiance and my profligate obstinacy. In vain I endeavored to comfort myself with the thought that I had pretended no deep feeling toward her, that I had received no more from her than I had returned. The feeling of abhorrence, disgust, and self-contempt would not be reasoned away—and now to-day I am almost tempted to believe there was something mysterious about the whole affair: an indefinite horror of the guilt toward my dearest friend, with which I had laden my soul.

“The following day I staid at home and saw no one. Not because I was afraid of meeting her again; for it never entered my thoughts that she would take a step across her threshold, lest she should encounter my gaze. In this respect, however, I found myself deceived. She actually made her appearance on the beach, about noon, as beautiful and unembarrassed as ever; they had asked her about me, and she had replied that she had seen noth-

ing of me since we landed the night before. Perhaps I had caught a cold on the excursion !

“ ‘ *Une femme est un diable !* ’ ”

“ But on the third day, when, after pondering on this profound saying, I issued forth again, anxious to see whether she would maintain her calmness in my presence too, I heard that she had gone away by the first steamer that morning—no one knew whither.

“ This was my last day on the island. About noon I received the sad message that called me home. With the evening boat I left the scene of this vile farce, the bitter memory of which did not fade from my thoughts for long years afterward.

“ It is true the days of mourning that awaited me at home, and then soon afterward the only true passion of my life, helped me to consign what had happened to the dim realm of the past—until it rose up before me this evening in all the horror of the present, and I was made to see that the penance I supposed I had satisfied by my separation from Irene was now demanded of me for the first time ; and that the happiness of my whole life was to be the price of a guilt which I thought I had long since outlived.

“ For as to this open confession, which would be sufficient, if produced before any court, to give you back the freedom you so long for—I know you too well not to feel sure that you will never make use of it. Therefore, you too will continue in chains, and I—how I should despise myself if, with this hellish laughter of Nemesis ringing in my ears, I should appear again before the dear girl I had so recently recovered, and should offer myself as a fitting husband, while you and Julie were obliged, by my guilt, to remain separated, at least before the world ! The fact

that I have to suffer more than I sinned does not in the least change the question.

"It has always been the custom of Divine justice to make use of different scales and different weights and measures, in exacting its dues. The sin that one man is scarcely made to expiate by a disagreeable hour costs another his own happiness and the happiness of all those dear to him !

"And now I have said all that I had to say. I shall refer Irene, to whom I have merely sent a short note, to you, in case she should insist upon learning the true reason why I am forced to leave her anew—and this time forever—without looking on her face again. Perhaps if I did I should not have the courage—and then I should be all the more contemptible in your eyes.

"It won't be long now before morning. Then I will saddle my horse, ride back to town, pack my trunks, and take good care that this letter does not come into your hands until there is no longer any danger that your magnanimity or your pity will attempt to restrain a man who can only recover his self-respect in exile.

"Farewell !—I do not dare to call you by the old familiar name. But since, from what I know of you, you will not cease, in spite of all that has happened, to cherish a warm feeling toward me, let me say, in conclusion, that you must not think of me as a despairing man who is ready to throw away his ruined life too cheaply. The sweets of life are, indeed, behind me ; but much that is useful still lies open for me to do, so that I may atone to all mankind for the old crime I committed against an individual. Perhaps I may some time find out why it is that fate should have chosen me, from all the rest, to be punished with double measure for my sins. FELIX."

CHAPTER XV.

JULIE had long ago finished reading the letter, and still she stood motionless at the window, while Jansen, his head sunk on his breast, sat on the sofa in a state between waking and sleeping.

It was not until the sheets slipped from her hand and fell at his feet that he started from his stupor. But he did not pick them up.

"What does he write?" he asked in a hollow voice.

"Just what you thought he would," she answered. "You will hardly find anything new in the letter, or at all events, anything that can alter things. So you had better read it at some calmer hour, after you have had a good sleep. In spite of all, I feel sure the letter will do you good. It would have been impossible to write of an unworthy subject in a more dignified way, and I, at least, have no worse opinion of our friend since I have heard his sad story. I believe everything will yet go well, and we needn't even lose our friend. He speaks, to be sure, of his self-imposed exile, and has also written a farewell letter to Irene, because he is of too chivalrous a nature to allow himself a happiness of which he thinks he has deprived us."

He raised his head and looked at her with a dazed, inquiring look in his eyes.

"I don't understand a word!" he said.

She bent over him, clasped her arms round his neck, and kissed him on the forehead.

"It isn't at all necessary you should understand me, dear one. Only keep quiet and trust to your best friend.

It is true, circumstances treat us ill ! but a true love and a little common-sense—oughtn't they to come out triumphant over all the tricks of blind fortune ? I am only a woman ; but it goes against my pride to submit so tamely and helplessly, when life is at stake. For in our hearts, is not everything pure between us two ? And shall we not belong to one another merely because all sorts of impurity and hostility work against us from without ? No, my dearest, we will not submit to this. Because we live in an imperfect world, we will do our best to make it more perfect ; at least on that plot of earth on which our cot may stand."

Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke, but she smiled upon him so tenderly that, for the first time in a long while, a sense of warmth passed over the soul of this broken-hearted man.

"What do you mean, dear ?" he asked, looking at her in surprise.

"Be still—not yet !" she whispered, as she brushed back his hair from his forehead and kissed his eyes. "But if you love me, as you say, and as I must believe you do or else I could not live, trust me and do just what I ask. In the first place ride home and take some breakfast, at which little Frances will keep you company. And then lie down and sleep as well and as soundly as you possibly can. But I must wake you up toward evening, for I shall expect to see you at my house punctually at seven o'clock. If you will be very obedient and do all this, you shall learn, as a reward, the plan I have formed to smooth over these wearing troubles, and to make four good people happy. Until then don't try to think what it can be, but rely upon your true love. Will you do this ?"

She kissed him long and tenderly, while he stammered some confused words. Then she led him out of the room. He cast a timid look toward the door of his saint factory.

"My child," he said, "I am ashamed of myself. You saw me there ! Is it possible you can love a madman ?"

"I am not a bit afraid," she smiled. "That wild spirit will never, even in its darkest hour, shatter anything that is sacred to us both."

When she saw the drosky roll away, she breathed more freely, and went slowly into the house. She had given the friends, who waited impatiently for news, a hint to withdraw and not to come in his way. Kohle had gone with Rosenbusch into the latter's studio ; Angelica sat before her easel without touching a brush. Now, when Julie entered, she rushed upon her in her violent way. "Well ?" she cried. "But what is it ? you have been crying !"

"Not for sorrow, dearest ! Though there was room for that too. For much that is bitter lies behind us, and how much more beautiful it all might be ! But the best is not lost—listen—I must tell you something."

She stooped over and whispered something in her ear. A loud cry of joy burst from the faithful soul. She blushed deeply from joyful surprise, and the next minute she had her arms round Julie's neck, almost suffocating her with kisses and caresses.

"Foolish girl," said Julie, escaping from her at last. "What is the matter ? Didn't you always prophesy it would turn out this way in the end ? Now do me the favor to be as sensible as it is possible for an artist to be. You must help me ; without you—how would it be possible for us to be ready by this evening ? I want to tell you at once how I have thought it all out !"

They remained together for another half hour engaged in a most earnest consultation, and then separated, after many tender embraces and assurances of eternal friendship. The two men in the next room had only heard through the wall the cry of joy, and then an unintelligible whispering and murmuring ; their impatience had been cruelly racked. When, therefore, the door was heard to open, they too stepped out into the entry with an air of quiet reproach.

"Angelica will tell you all about it !" cried Julie, running quickly down the stairs. "And I depend upon your both giving me the pleasure of a call this evening. Don't be alarmed about Jansen. He is at home now, and well taken care of—"

With this she disappeared from their sight.

"Fräulein Minna Engelken," said Rosenbusch, "will your at length condescend to inform us what this tedious session with closed doors has to portend ?"

"Only as much as it will be proper and necessary for you to know, Herr von Rosebud !" replied the painter, who was so excited and preoccupied that she had put on her hat wrong side before, and had not succeeded much better with the rest of her street toilet. "The two gentlemen are invited to take a cup of tea with Fräulein Julie this evening, and are requested to convey this message to Herr von Schnetz, to Herr Elfinger, and to Papa Schoepf also. You are to appear punctually at a quarter before seven in full uniform, and with all your decorations. For particulars, see small bills. And now I must beg to be excused—I have such a host of commissions—and since the lords of creation cannot possibly be made use of for anything outside of the arts and sciences—I will say *au revoir* ! until to-night, gentlemen !

She made a coquettish courtesy, hustled the astonished visitors out of her studio without much ceremony, and flew, singing, down the stairs.

CHAPTER XVI.

JULIE had pursued her way with far more hesitation as soon as she reached the street. She stood still more than once, as though she were considering whether she should go on. In regard to Felix's letter to Jansen—of whose contents Irene would have to be informed in order that she might understand the flight of her lover—if she should send it to her instead of delivering it herself, would not that be more considerate? Would it not spare the poor girl the shame of looking in the face a friend who knew of her lover's sins? And yet, on the other hand, would it not be a last comfort to her to know that even those who were most directly affected by it had not withdrawn their affection from the deeply-penitent man, but would gladly have done anything to convince him of the folly of his ideas in regard to his self-imposed penance?

She felt that she ought to tell her all this immediately, and by word of mouth, hard as it would be for her.

When she reached the hotel, the scenes of the preceding day rose up so vividly before her that, fearful of meeting Nelida, she hurried up the stairs without first making any inquiries at the office. Her anxiety was superfluous. The countess had over-exerted her lame foot the day before, and lay in bed in the greatest pain.

But, upon arriving up-stairs, the baron came forward

to meet her with such a woe-begone face, that she was greatly frightened.

"Where is Irene?" she cried. "Sick?"

"I hope not," answered the old gentleman, grasping her hand, and evidently breathing more freely, as if a guardian angel had at length appeared to him. "At least, she was in such excellent health two hours ago that, in spite of the bad weather, she suddenly made up her mind to start off over the Brenner pass, accompanied only by her maid."

"She has gone? Then I come too late!"

"My dear Fräulein, you at all events come early enough to bring comfort and aid to an old man. You see before you one who has had unexampled ill-luck in his experience of paternal joys. My own daughter slams the door in my face, and my other, my adopted daughter, who ought at least to honor me as her educator and natural protector, runs away from me. It comes all in a heap, to turn my hair gray before its time!"

"But why did you let her go? Why did you permit her—"

"Permit her! As if she asked for my permission! Just think of it, it was *she*, on the contrary, who gave *me* permission to remain here a while longer, in order that I might arrange my affairs 'in peace,' as she expressed it, before following her—which, again, I am not to do until I receive her express permission! Alas! my dear Fräulein, have I remained a bachelor, and manfully withstood all the fascinations of your sex, merely to be put under the control of two grown daughters in my old age?"

"Do tell me what reason Irene gave you for this sudden decision?" Julie asked, after a pause.

"You are very good to suppose she would consider it

worth while to give me reasons!" cried the old gentleman. "Well-educated children are accustomed to do whatever they feel like, and not to hand in a long account to their foolish papas. That that rascal, Felix, is at the bottom of it all—so much I have worked out by my talent for combination. Last night she went to bed in the best of spirits, and even condescended to give me a dutiful kiss, whose value I knew how to appreciate because of its rarity. Early this morning, while I was sitting here waiting for her to come to breakfast, a note arrived from her *fiancé*. I send it in to her, not suspecting anything out of the way, and a half hour passes before I discover what the trouble is. All at once the door opens, and my Fräulein niece appears in complete traveling-rig. 'Uncle,' she says—and her face is as pale and as set as a wax doll's—'I am going to start off for Innsbruck by the next train. I beg you not to ask the reason. You may be sure that I have considered the matter maturely' (maturely! Only think of it, dear Fräulein, a whole half hour!) 'and, as I know that you won't be able to tear yourself away from here so quickly, I sha'n't think of asking you to accompany me. It will be sufficient if Louisa goes with me. I shall make my first stop in Riva. From there I will write to you when you are to follow. I'—and at this point her voice grew a little unsteady—'I want to be alone for a while. You may say good-by for me to such of my acquaintances as you see fit. Be sure and remember me most particularly to Fräulein Julie. *Adieu!*' I was, as you can imagine, somewhat taken aback by this order of the day in true bulletin style. It was not until she turned away, and I saw that she was really in earnest in what she said, that I found enough breath to ask, 'But Felix! Does he know about this? And what shall I tell

him when he comes and no longer finds his betrothed here?' 'He will not come,' she said. 'He—he is prevented. You will find out all about it later. Now I must hurry, unless I want to miss the train.' And with this, she was up and away! Oh, my dear Fräulein! I, too, can cry out with the old cabinet-maker in a blood-and-thunder piece they are playing here at the theatre: 'I no longer understand this world!' Tell me yourself, is there a kreutzer's worth of common-sense in this whole comedy? To say nothing of the capricious Fräulein, there is the lover, who, only yesterday, swore by all the stars in Heaven he was the happiest wretch who had ever been pardoned with the rope already round his neck—he comes to a different conclusion over night and 'is prevented!' Now, you associate with these artists, Fräulein Julie. Tell me, do they learn diabolical tricks of this kind in their so-called Paradise, and are they the result of their celebrated joviality? If so, then my Kabyles and Arabs are the most Philistine of Philistines compared with these gentlemen!"

Julie had listened, full of sympathy, to this long outpouring of the heart. Yet now she had to laugh.

"Dear Herr Baron," she said, "don't take the matter so to heart. I think I am justified in assuring you that all will be cleared up and come out right in the end. Whatever I can do to bring this about, I shall naturally do with all my heart, since my own peace and happiness depend upon knowing that the young couple are happy too. I hope soon to be able to talk the matter over with your niece in person. In case you should have any messages, I also start for the South to-morrow, and shall most certainly go by the way of Riva."

"You, too!" broke out the baron, springing up as if he had been struck by lightning. "Now the world is

coming to an end! That was the only thing lacking. No, tell me you are only joking! What is it that drives you off as if you, too, had been stung by a scorpion? And, besides, you made me a promise in regard to my child—or, perhaps, she goes too, now that all Paradise is being loaded on a cart, and Bohemia retreats through the deepest snow to the land of sunshine?”

“You make me laugh, dear baron, although I am truly in no mood for laughter. I repeat, only have patience for a little while. I can’t tell you about it to-day. I hope to be able to put your mind at rest about your daughter before I start. You will receive a few lines from me to-morrow, and at the same time a letter to Irene’s *fiancé*, whose address I don’t know—for, the truth is, he has gone away because of an affair in which his honor is at stake. Promise me, as a reward for what I am going to do as your mediator with Herr Schoepf, to see that this letter reaches Baron Felix’s hands safely, at all costs. They must know something about his whereabouts on his estates, and, if the worst comes to the worst, we shall have to seek for him through the newspapers.”

“Now I have it!” cried the baron, eagerly; “an affair of honor—a *rencontre*—and that is why the girl was so beside herself that she could not bear even my vicinity. Well, if that’s the case, I don’t feel troubled. The boy has a sure hand, and won’t be such a fool as to let himself be shot dead now that he is engaged to be married. But only tell me—*contre qui?*—overnight in this way—and all the while with good comrades of his, and peaceable disciples of art to boot!”

Julie considered it her wisest course to make no other reply than a nod of the head to this conjecture, which evidently completely allayed the old gentleman’s fears.

He grew very jolly again, kissed her hand repeatedly, and only begged her at parting to do her best to help him fulfill his paternal duties.

"Tell the defiant little red-head," he cried after her, as she was going down-stairs, "that I haven't the slightest desire to force my tenderness upon her in person. We can get accustomed to one another by letter, and familiarize ourselves with the thought that we have found one another again. Life in Germany is too full of adventures for me. I am going back to my quiet desert ; and to you, my beautiful friend, I will send the skin of the first lion I kill, as a reward for your endeavors to help a father to a daughter who doesn't want to have anything to do with him !"

CHAPTER XVII.

JANSEN had gone home as if in a dream ; and even the wild demonstrations of joy with which he was received by his child did not succeed in driving away the stupor that hung over him. He did not ask either Frances or her foster-mother what had happened in his absence, but stared vacantly, sighed often, and returned confused answers. When he had eaten something, and drunk some strong wine, he fell asleep while sitting at table, with difficulty roused himself sufficiently to tumble into bed, and had just sense enough left to impress upon the woman the fact that he must be waked at six o'clock.

Then, when the evening came, little Frances only succeeded, after much shouting and shaking, in dispelling his leaden sleep ; from which, however, the weary man awoke with joyous eyes. He lay for a while and enjoyed the

physical relief, the peace in his heart, which he had missed so long. Every word his beloved had said to him that morning came back to his mind again ; he knew that with all her kind words she could have meant but one thing ; and yet he trembled at the thought that it might all have been a delusion. But the certainty of happiness invariably kept the upper hand.

When, at length, he arose, he felt as if he had recovered from an illness—as if he were invigorated by fresh blood—and he marveled at this transformation ; for he remembered that on this very morning he would have liked best to burrow his way into the earth and never see the sun again. He kissed his little daughter again and again, pressed the old woman's hand—the foster-mother was absent—and started off for Julie's lodgings.

But, when he arrived at the house, he was surprised to see a bright light streaming through the blinds of all five windows. He knew that she was fond of having her room bright, but for all that it struck him that all was not as usual. He asked the old servant, who helped him to take off his overcoat in the hall, but received no definite answer ; and he was painfully surprised when he opened the door and saw the brightly-lighted room full of people.

It is true, they were all familiar faces. Angelica sat on a sofa by the side of old Schoepf, Rossel had established himself in the most comfortable of the two arm-chairs, and Rosenbusch and Kohle appeared to be absorbed in the contemplation of some engravings on the wall, while Julie was conversing with Schnetz and Elfinger near the door. A covered table, decorated with beautiful bouquets, stood along the wall on the side where the windows were, and little Frances's foster-mother was busy

adding the last finishing touches to it. They were all in evening dress, and even Rosenbusch had refrained from wearing his historical velvet-jacket, which the summer had dealt with pretty severely, and appeared in a magnificent dress-coat—the only trouble with which was that it was rather too broad, inasmuch as it had been taken from Rossel's wardrobe. But the most beautiful of all, in her simplicity, appeared the mistress of these halls herself. She wore a white dress of the finest woolen, which exposed but a little of her white shoulders and her arms as far as the elbow. A plain gold chain, from which hung a medallion containing a miniature of her mother, was wound several times about her neck ; her hair was brushed back smoothly, and intertwined with a garland of myrtle ; in her bosom was fastened a dark-red pomegranate blossom.

In his first surprise Jansen started back from the threshold with a look of bitter disappointment, which Julie alone understood. But, before he had time to recover his presence of mind, he felt himself seized by the gentlest hands, and disarmed by a single soft word whispered in his ear.

"Here he comes at last," she said, leading the speechless man into the centre of the room. "And first of all I must beg his pardon for not having told him beforehand whom he would find here. For even though they are only our best and dearest friends whom I have invited to our farewell gathering—still, I know you would have preferred to see no one this evening but myself. And yet, though I would gladly do anything else for your sake—I could not do otherwise than what I have done on this occasion. Our friends all know that I am determined to share my life with you until death parts us. Do you not feel with me that it would be contrary to my

honor and my womanly pride, to pass clandestinely into the new life that has been opened to us, as if we had committed a sin, instead of entering upon it with open brow, followed by the congratulations of our dearest friends, as other happy bridal couples do ? ”

She stopped, for a moment, overcome by her emotion. But, as he made no movement, except to raise to his lips the hand with which she held his, she recovered her courage, and continued in a lower voice :

“Our rôles are so singularly transposed. It is customary for the voice of the bride to be heard only when she says ‘yes’ at the foot of the altar. But here there is no altar, and the bride must pronounce the wedding address herself. I confess that, since I plighted my heart and my troth to my beloved friend, I have always cherished the hope that things would turn out differently. I thought it would be so beautiful to go up to the altar with him, as other brides do ; and have our union so sanctioned. But, since this could not be, what right have we to be so cowardly and narrow-minded as to cling to a mere form when two human lives are at stake ? As soon as I saw that it was to decide the weal or woe of his life and of his art, every scruple left me. We are neither of us so young or so inexperienced as to be deceived about our hearts. They are indissolubly bound together. And it is therefore no crime and no presumption, but something that was as certainly decreed by Heaven as was ever union between two human beings, for me to be from this day forth the true wife of this man, and for him to be forever my beloved husband.”

She turned away for a moment ; her voice failed her. A breathless silence reigned. The gentlemen, with the exception of the bridegroom, who gazed fixedly in his

beloved's eyes, lowered their eyes and stood solemn and still as if in a house of worship ; the little foster-mother held her handkerchief before her eyes, and the big tear-drops rolled down Angelica's face, while she struggled to look at her friend as cheerfully and encouragingly as possible. Now, when the latter turned to her, she hastily took up a little silver dish she had held in readiness and handed it to Julie, trying, as she did so, to give her friend's hand a stolen pressure. Two little gold rings, looking rubbed and thin, as if they had been worn a long time, lay in the plate.

"These are the wedding rings of my parents," said the bride. "For many long years they served as the sign of a union that grew ever firmer in good and in bad fortune. I think you will not oppose me, dearest, if I use them to sanctify our marriage. I herewith give you this ring that my father received from my mother, and swear to you, before these friends of ours, to be a true wife to you and a good mother to your child. And if you do not repent of having offered me your life—"

She could not finish. In a sudden overflow of feeling he seized the other ring, thrust it at random on one of her fingers, and folded the blushing girl in a passionate embrace. It seemed as if he would never let her go again; his breast heaved with suppressed sobbing, he hid his face upon her neck, and her soft locks dried the tears he was ashamed to show.

In the mean while it appeared that none of the witnesses took the slightest notice of this passionate outburst. Rossel seemed to be earnestly studying the pattern of the carpet ; old Schoepf took out his handkerchief and polished his spectacles ; Elfinger stood at the piano, with his back toward the newly-married couple, and slowly turned

over the pages of a music-book. Angelica fell upon the foster-mother's neck, while Kohle seized Rosenbusch's hand and shook it warmly.

At length when the bride had somewhat recovered her composure and had gently released herself from her husband's arms, Schnetz, who up to this time had been violently plucking at his imperial, advanced toward the couple and stammered out a few words of cordial felicitation. This gave the signal for a general crowding around, and the most joyful handshaking and congratulation. All spoke at the same time, each held the hand of the bride and bridegroom as tightly as if he hoped never to have to release it again, and every one seemed to want to repudiate, as something very superfluous and out of place, the emotion which had moved all their hearts but a few minutes before. Angelica was the first to restore quiet and order to this confusion, by rapping on a glass and requesting the guests to come to supper. The bridal couple were to start on their wedding journey in a few hours, and, as the bridegroom had not even packed his trunk yet, it was doubly advisable for them not to let the wedding feast grow cold.

So they took their places. Old Schoepf was given the seat of honor on the other side of the bride, Rosenbusch captured a place next to Angelica, and Rossel took charge of the foster-mother, although, as a general thing, he studiously avoided having any women near him when at table. Of the meal itself it will only be necessary to say that Edward Rossel had placed his own cook at Angelica's disposal, and had sent his servants along with her; the selection and the cooling of the wine had also been his care, although, except himself, scarcely any one of the guests took much notice of what they ate and drank.

Those in particular who sat opposite the bridal couple seemed to be so fascinated by the sight of their happiness, by the beauty of Julie, and the dreamy look of inspiration in Jansen's face, that they looked very little at their plates. To this number belonged Angelica, whose hand wandered across the table every now and then to meet that of her adored friend under the shadow of the huge bouquet.

Julie's plan was to carry her husband off to Italy, there to look for some spot on which to settle down and found their home. When they had made up their minds whether Florence, or Rome, or Venice was to be their resting-place, they were to return and get little Frances, who would have been rather out of place in this wintry wedding-journey of her parents.

Meanwhile Julie had taken advantage of a favorable opportunity to enter into a low conversation with old Schoepf in regard to the future of his grandchild. In spite of the power she exerted over all with whom she came in contact, she did not find it easy to break down the old man's obstinacy. Finding that all her assertions of how sincere the baron's remorse was were of as little avail as her efforts to convince him of the material benefit which the reconciliation would be to his grandchild's future, she finally summoned cunning to her aid, and represented that in granting this request he would be conferring a personal favor upon her, a sort of wedding-present, which such an old friend of her husband surely could not refuse her. The chivalrous old man could resist no longer, and so, with a solemn shake of the hand, Julie secured all that the baron could demand with any kind of justice, although a complete reconciliation still seemed quite unattainable for the present.

Jansen had been listening to this conversation, which had been carried on in a low tone ; and now he, in his turn, thanked the old man by a pressure of the hand. All this time he had scarcely uttered a word. His heart was full of a bliss too deep for words ; the cheerful noise of the good people about him sounded in his ears as if it came from a great distance ; his eyes rested on the flowers before his plate, and did not even venture to gaze at the noble woman who was really his own at last ; and it was only with difficulty that he could force himself even to smile when the others burst into roars of laughter over some joke of the lieutenant's, or some enthusiastic expression of Angelica's.

As they sat thus, there suddenly burst forth from Julie's piano, at which Elfinger was seated, the first bars of the wedding-march in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." On the instant all voices were hushed, and they stood listening to the fairy strains that made them forget, for the moment, that the winter night with its thousand glittering stars looked in upon them, and suffered no other elfin tricks than those which possibly lurked concealed in the foam of the champagne glasses.

When it came to an end the silence still continued for a while. The bride had disappeared with Angelica into the next room, and now returned again in traveling-dress. Schnetz now called upon Rosenbusch to let the departing couple take some of his verses with them as a farewell blessing on their journey. But he, who was generally so obliging, could not be induced to do this at any price. He would only promise to forward them his bad rhymes in black and white, accompanied with marginal illustrations.

"It is late," said Julie, "and we have still to take

leave of our child. We leave her in the best of care, and hope soon to see her again. And now we must say good-by."

She first embraced the foster-mother and kissed her warmly. Then she gave her hand and a kind word and look to each of the others in turn, and hastened out of the room, no longer able to control her emotion. Jansen, too, had parted from his friends with great feeling, entreating them all not to follow him beyond the door. Angelica alone insisted upon accompanying the couple as far as the carriage. The others stepped to the window and watched them get in, together with old Erich, who was to accompany them, while Angelica still stood on the carriage step unable to tear herself from Julie's neck. When she at last stepped down, and the door was slammed to, those in the house stepped to the wide-opened window, with full glasses and burning lamps and candles, and shouted a loud "good luck!" to the departing couple. The waving of a handkerchief and of hands from the carriage doors answered them; and the drosky rolled away.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

ALL of a sudden Paradise had become very desolate. In the rooms that had once resounded with conversation and laughter until long after midnight, there now assembled a mere handful of rather morose and chilly comrades, who did not thaw out even over their wine. They sat behind their glasses, silent and disconsolate, each one expecting of the other that he would suddenly break out again in the old festal mood. For, in spite of the great necessity for social intercourse that is inherent in the German character, nothing is more remarkable than the rarity of true social talent, and still more the lack of that social sense of duty which urges the individual to do all in his power to contribute to the general entertainment. Most Germans go into society just as they go to the theatre, and believe they have done all that duty requires of them when, from their seats, they have made careful observations of the actors; and they think themselves justified in complaining of being bored whenever the latter are in a bad mood for acting. This unmistakable decline, which generally takes place in every club soon after it has reached its highest prosperity, was still further hastened, in the case of the Paradise society, by outward circumstances. In Jansen's departure it had lost the one mem-

ber whose mere presence gave it its distinctive character. The very fact that he had no desire to rule had led them to give him, without opposition, that leadership for which he was qualified before all others by his superiority, mature judgment, and simplicity of bearing. Still, there were several among his friends who might have succeeded in upholding the old traditions after his departure, had it not happened that the very ones who were best fitted and most influential had themselves personal reasons for withdrawing.

Since the recovery of his grandchild it was impossible to induce old Schoepf to pass an evening away from home. He devoted himself entirely to taming his little refractory savage—a task in which he was obliged to work very carefully, for the strange creature still threatened to run away if they tried to restrict her freedom in the slightest degree. She would not submit for a moment to any regular course of instruction, but thought she did quite enough if she took charge of household matters, for which she showed great aptitude, and attended to her toilet or took a walk with her grandfather in her spare hours. She never asked after his friends, Jansen and Schnetz, not even after Felix, who had disappeared so suddenly. Her face had grown rather prettier from good living and comfortable surroundings, and her figure fuller; and she could now gratify her taste for dress, for her grandfather treated her like a pet doll. It was no wonder, therefore, that Rossel only grew more confirmed in his passion, particularly as he made it a rule to see her daily.

He came in the evening, generally bringing with him Kohle, who had been the greatest sufferer by Jansen's departure. The two gradually became so accustomed to the old man's parlor that they willingly gave up the

nights at the Paradise club for its sake. Usually, after they had talked awhile, or had looked over some photographs or engravings, Rossel drew a book from his pocket, either a volume of poems or something else that was interesting at once to children and sages, and began to read aloud ; apparently without giving a thought to the girl, who took pains to move about as much as possible, as if to show that both he and his companion were utterly indifferent to her. Sometimes, however, when he chanced to strike the right key, she would crouch down on her little chair near the stove, and listen with open mouth and wide-open eyes in which the light of intelligence was slowly beginning to dawn. But she never allowed herself to be drawn into a conversation about what had been read, and never varied in her manner toward her admirer, so that he perceptibly grew thin with disappointment.

This same conduct, so singularly made up of frivolity and persistency, she maintained toward her own father. After old Schoepf had consented to allow the baron to exercise at least the outward rights of a father, an interview had taken place between the two ; and the sincere melancholy of the baron, who was usually such a light-hearted cavalier, had not failed to make an impression upon the grim old man. As the latter felt that he could not acquit himself of all blame in the affair, they had arrived at an understanding which, though not exactly cordial, was nevertheless very different from the frosty relations that had previously existed between them ; and arrangements had been made for the daughter's benefit in accordance with the baron's wishes. During the half hour which she consented to give, at her grandfather's request, to an interview between her and the author of her

being, she sat at her papa's side as cold and stiff as possible, and almost as if she were giving an audience ; while he exhausted his amiability in attempts to touch her heart. She did not feel the slightest affection for him, she declared over and over again. Before she saw him she hated him ; now she felt absolutely indifferent toward him, and she could not understand how her dead mother could ever have loved him. He must not flatter himself that she would ever feel differently. She had never been able to bear faces like his ; she was sorry, but it was always her way to speak the truth, and because he had lied to her mother was no reason why she should now lie to him. Let him keep his money. She had no intention of marrying ; and even if she had she would not accept a man who took her merely because she had a rich father.

That the beautiful Fräulein was her cousin did indeed seem strange to her. At first she laughed at the idea, as if it were all a joke ; then she blushed crimson, no one knew why, stood up suddenly, made her father a stiff courtesy, and hurried out of the room.

With a sigh the baron left the old man's lodgings, to go and give his old companion-in-arms, Schnetz, an account of this unsuccessful attempt at reconciliation.

Ever since the wedding evening the lieutenant, too, had felt himself in a misanthropic and depressed state of mind, which kept him at home for months and made him forget Paradise utterly ; all the more readily because it seemed to him that Jansen's presence there was necessary to its very existence. His artistic talent was, after all, merely the shadow cast by his character when it chanced to stand in a humorous light. He had taken up with the artists because their society seemed to him more

tolerable than any other that came within the great dreariness of his ordinary life, less because they created beautiful works than because they were men who were capable of producing something that lay beyond the pale of ordinary society, for which he had a profound contempt. Even they did not escape his Thersites mood. But the fact that he had discovered one among them at whom he found it absolutely impossible to rail, and whom he had not the heart to ridicule even with his black art, had inspired him with a strange feeling toward Jansen ; as though, if the whole decaying world should fall to pieces and leave only this one man, nothing would really be lost, and the human race, copied after this model, would be restored to a far higher grandeur. He had really *loved* this man, carefully as he tried to conceal such "sentimentalities" from every one, especially from himself. And now he sat alone again in his Timonian bitterness, cutting silhouettes in the dark, and angry with all other men because all of them taken together could not compensate him for the loss of this one.

He received the baron exceedingly badly, listened to his account of his unloving child with a sardonic grin, and assured him that the only consolation he found in this whole muddle of a world was that there were still a few beings left, even of the female sex, who would not let themselves be fooled by fine words, and who spoke out just what they thought. He advised him to go to Africa and shoot a lioness, and adopt her brood, whereupon he immediately began to cut out the baron in black paper as the nurse of a wildcat, that he might give him a memento to take with him on his journey.

For although Irene had not yet given him official permission, her uncle had, nevertheless, determined to follow

her. As matters now stood he no longer dared to present himself even to the old countess, who, when he called to deliver Irene's farewell, had preached him an edifying sermon upon her incredible conduct, and had received his jesting answer with a very bad grace. There was not the slightest prospect of hearing anything further in regard to Felix here in the city. No one knew in what direction the supposed duel had taken him. Thus the old habit of being under his niece's thumb, and the uselessness and joylessness of his further stay in Munich, drew the old baron toward the South; and the harsh manner in which even Schnetz had suddenly turned upon him made the parting very easy.

He put the silhouette in his letter-case without a smile, shook his old friend by the hand, and left him, expressing the hope that they might meet again under a warmer sun.

CHAPTER II.

Two other pillars of the Paradise Club had grown shaky, and were in no condition to arrest its fall.

Rosenbusch and Elfinger had both appeared at the first meeting which took place after the unfortunate masquerade, but in a conspicuously depressed mood, and neither so witty nor so grateful for the wit of others as was usually the case with them.

On the way home they confessed to one another that the thing had outlived its day; even the wine to-night was much sourer than in the good old times.

Now, the truth is, it was the very same wine, but its flavor could not overcome the bitter taste on the tongue

- of the drinkers ; and in each this bitter taste arose from exactly opposite causes.

Elfinger's deep and unswerving fondness had really succeeded in stealing away his little devotee's heart from her heavenly bridegroom. At one of those afternoon services in the little church already mentioned, she had with many tears allowed the confession to escape her that his love was returned; adding, however, a saving clause, that once more put all his hopes to naught, that she should not on this account consider herself any the less bound by her former vow, particularly as her father confessor had clearly proved to her that she would be neither happy on earth nor blessed in heaven unless she renounced her sinful love for a Lutheran, and especially for one who had once been an actor.

To Elfinger's most eloquent attempts at dissuasion, the poor child had only replied by tears and shakes of the head, and had answered the long letters which her lover sent to her almost daily, by nicely-written little notes, not altogether free from orthographical blunders, in which she besought him in the most touching terms not to make her heart still heavier, but rather to move to some other lodgings and never to meet her again.

This correspondence had, of course, merely poured oil upon the fire, on this as well as on the other side of the street. Nevertheless it really did seem, after all, as though their love was not destined to overcome the evil powers; and in his grief at this Elfinger began more and more to lose his taste for the joys of Paradise, generally spending his evenings at home, brooding over plans for the overthrow of the priesthood—which resulted in his toiling through all the pamphlets against the Vatican Council, and in his composing for some of the smaller

newspapers violent articles favoring the abolition of convents.

But, while his fate was trembling in the balance, his next-door neighbor was still worse off; and, sad to relate, solely because of the incredible worldly-mindedness of his sweetheart. Through his trusty ally, the servant-girl, he learned that the only son of a rich brewer, from one of the smaller cities of the region, was paying his attentions to her; and the pretty little witch appeared to have refrained from doing any of those things by which even the most obedient daughter may show her aversion to a hated suitor. Rosenbusch, whose soul still clung fondly to his romantic elopement project, refused, at first, to believe in such villainous treachery. But when his letters remained unanswered, the last one indeed being returned unopened by the post, he fell into a terrible passion, spent whole nights in composing the most insulting poems against brewers' sons and Philistines' daughters, and gave himself up more and more to the most extravagant melancholy, misanthropy, and dislike for work. He began to neglect his person too in the most terrible way, wore, as his daily clothing, that ample dress-coat of Edward Rossel's, which the latter had formally made over to him after the wedding evening; and over this a coarse red-and-blue plaid shawl, and a cap which he had cut out himself from his old slouch hat, whose rim had been nibbled and considerably diminished by his white mice, one night when he had left the door of the cage open.

It is true, he still went regularly to the studio and shut himself in under the pretense of laboring at some great, mysterious work; yet he never touched a brush all day long, but cowered over the stove, in which he managed to keep up a wretched little fire made out of frag-

ments of old fences that he had picked up here and there. There he sat wrapped in his shawl, an unlighted cigar in his mouth, spying around among his antiquities, to see which piece he should next tear from his soul and deliver to the shop-keepers.

For a very considerable payment that he had to make had exhausted his last penny of ready money. In his emotion over the martyrdom of the faithful dog, Rosenbusch had determined to give Jansen a pleasant surprise by ordering a grave-stone for the little mound in the garden, bearing the following profound inscription :

HIC JACET HOMO,

Nihil humani a se alienum putans.

It was merely a plain block of granite ornamented by a dog's head cut in profile, and the letters were not even gilded. Yet the stone-cutter's bill proved to be twice as large as the first estimate of the cost ; so that he had been obliged to sell the sword and scabbard of a Walloon cuirassier, a rusty snaffle-bit of the time of the Swedish war, and his last halberds ; and besides this, to paint an oil-portrait of the stone-cutter's wife, in order to complete this act of respect without incurring any debts.

He never said a word about his troubles to any of his friends, not even to Elfinger, and at the dedication of the monument, over which he presided, he conducted himself with so much ease and dignity that they all thought he had really found some unknown patron who advanced him money on his great new picture. The fact that he appeared in a dress-coat, in spite of the bitter winter cold, was attributed to the formality with which he insisted upon treating the whole affair.

He himself tried hard at first to keep up his spirits. He composed an account of the ceremony in his most feeling verses, and accompanied them with a sketch of the grave-stone and other illustrations relating to the dedication, and sent the document to Florence, where Jansen and Julie were then sojourning.

The postage for this parcel cost him his last kreutzer. That day it was nine o'clock in the evening before he eat his dinner (on credit) ; and even then he went to bed hungry.

But, though he deceived all others by the smiling mien with which he wrapped himself in his shawl and his love-sickness, there were two eyes near him that he could not blind in this way.

Those were the eyes of his neighbor Angelica, and they, too, no longer saw the world in such a rosy light as that in which it had appeared at Christmas.

The necessity that was inborn in her nature, to passionately worship something or other, and to give vent to her adoration in extravagant terms, no longer found anything to feed on since the departure of the happy pair. Indeed, she would have had a very poor opinion of herself if, after having found in Jansen the ideal of a true artist, and in Julie the quintessence of beauty, she had now been contented to take up with anything of a lower grade. At first she tried hard to grow sentimental over little Frances, and to transfer to the child the enthusiasm she felt for its parents. But as this was attended with some difficulty because of their living so far apart, as well as on account of a certain reserve peculiar to the little creature, she gradually withdrew from this also, and contented herself with visiting the child every Sunday and making enthusiastic speeches about its talents to its foster-mother.

The sensible little woman always received them rather coolly, partly because she disliked everything like gushing compliments, and partly because she felt hurt that her own children were completely overlooked. For this reason, and for this reason only, she was not sorry when, toward spring, a letter came from Julie with the request to bring the child to its parents in Florence as soon as the state of the weather would permit. Unfortunately, she could not come for the child herself as she had hoped, her doctor having forbidden her "for important reasons" to take the journey. Still, she had too great a yearning to see Frances to be able to wait any longer, and she entreated the faithful foster-mother to make still another sacrifice for her sake, and to take advantage of the occasion to get a peep at their Italian home.

Some fine presents were added for the other children and a letter for Angelica, in which her friend heartily besought her to accompany the child, and, if possible, to spend the whole summer with them. Jansen seconded this invitation in a very kind postscript; and the money enclosed for the traveling expenses was reckoned for three persons.

It is needless to describe the feelings of this good soul as she read this letter, and saw the prospect opened to her of seeing again with her own eyes, and clasping again in her arms, all that she loved and admired. With beating heart and glowing cheeks she sat for a good hour motionless before her easel, and had never in all her life felt so happily unhappy or so torn by conflicting wishes. When at last she had clearly made up her mind to decline the proffered happiness, she appeared, in her own eyes, such a subject for commiseration, notwithstanding all her consciousness of heroic virtue, that she began to weep bit-

terly, and did not heed how her tears fell upon a wreath of flowers in water color that she had just painted, moistening them with an all too natural dew.

CHAPTER III.

IN order to explain this, we must disclose a secret that our artist had heretofore guarded carefully from every one—even from herself, as far as such a thing was possible.

The fate of the one man with whom this peaceable soul always stood on a war-footing, and who, as it seemed, possessed none of all the qualities by which one could generally win her love and admiration, had become of such importance to her in the course of time, that her own weal and woe, and even such a happiness as had just been offered her, became but a secondary matter when compared with it.

That violent hate can turn into burning love is a fact that is no longer considered strange. But the transformation of a thoroughly honest and obvious contempt into the exact opposite, without the object of these conflicting feelings having changed especially himself, must ever remain a difficult riddle to solve. This was especially the case because this contempt for her neighbor was not directed against his character as an artist and a man, of whose good qualities she might in time have become more clearly convinced, but rested solely on the contradiction in their characters, which appeared to her to have been completely reversed in their cases from what Nature had intended.

Little of the Amazon as there was about her, she nevertheless felt herself, as compared with Rosenbusch, the stronger, more resolute and more manly of the two ; and, since devotion to something higher and stronger was a chief necessity of her nature, nothing would have struck her as more absurd than that this flute-playing, verse-scribbling art-colleague of hers, who decked himself out in silk and satin like a bearded girl, could ever become dangerous to her peace of mind.

Consequently, when she found that ever since that stolen kiss on Christmas night, innocent though it was, the picture of the robber rose up before her oftener than before, each time causing a certain ashamed surprise to creep over her virgin heart, she fought against this weakness with all her power, and took pains to exaggerate, in her own mind, the faults and absurdities of this gay deceiver. But, in doing so, she was obliged to occupy her thoughts with him to an uncommon extent, and she often caught herself studying his praiseworthy qualities with far greater fondness than his laughable ones. Unfortunately, she had plenty of spare time for these studies ; for, as Schnetz expressed it, she was enjoying a vacation from idolatry since Jansen's and Julie's departure. And, finally, what contributed as much as anything else to make her heart more tender, was the just fear that things were going badly with her neighbor, and might end seriously for him some fine day, unless some one came to his aid.

She positively breathed easier when she discovered that he was hungry and cold, and began quite cheerfully to revolve in her mind how she could best assist him.

She took good care to say nothing about it to his friends. To her alone he should owe his rescue, and that

without having the slightest suspicion of it. She herself could hardly be said to be swimming in luxury ; that which she earned was just sufficient to carry her through the world respectably ; for she had the greatest horror of anything in her art that had a taint of fraud about it, and was exceedingly conscientious with regard to such matters. More than once she had taken back a picture, with which the person who had ordered it expressed himself as quite content, merely because it did not satisfy herself.

But the suspiciously jolly air with which Rosenbusch met her on the stairs, the ominous stillness next door, where the stove no longer sang its morning song, nor the flute summoned the mice to the dance, so cut her to the heart, that she would not have hesitated even to have got into debt, if by so doing she could have saved her friend from bankruptcy.

It was a sunny morning in April ; she had accompanied little Frances and her foster-mother to the station, and had thus given up the last thing she had to exercise her sentimental devotion upon ; and now she walked slowly to her studio, firmly determined to seek consolation in her art. But on arriving up stairs, where a fresh canvas was already awaiting her, she made a mistake in the door, and, instead of going into her own workshop, knocked at the battle-painter's, of whom she had not caught a glimpse for several days.

Rosenbusch knew her knock well. He always declared it was a pity she did not play on the piano, she had such an excellent touch. However, he did not seem inclined to let her in ; at all events she had to knock three times, and to call out that it was no use, he needn't pretend any longer, she had seen him through the keyhole sitting there, and must come in for ten minutes as she had an

order for him ; then, at last, he slowly got up, crept to the door, sighing, and drew back the bolt.

As she entered she cast a stolen look at the bare walls of the room, that was as damp and chilly as a cellar, and at its miserable occupant, who had folded his shawl tight about his body just as a beetle does his wings in a rain-storm, and, with his pinched, half-starved looking little nose, was making a wretched attempt to look chipper and pleased.

"What are you making such an *ecce homo* face for?" she said, in her brusque tone, which now stood her in good stead in concealing her emotion.. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Herr von Rosenbusch, to sit here in a corner and mope, this heavenly weather. Besides, it's so cold here that the oil would freeze on one's brush. But I forget, you are not doing any painting now. You have another acute attack of your chronic laziness—or are you sick?"

"You are mistaken, honored patroness," said Rosenbusch, in his silver tenor, which now, however, sounded a little cracked. "I am quite well, with the exception of a certain nervousness that is often to be found among artists ; atrophy of the *nervus rerum*, the men of science call it. Besides, I am not sitting here so idle as you perhaps imagine ; I am working away at my great picture, having accustomed myself of late to first complete the picture in my head, down to the last light effect on the nostrils of a pack-horse. In this way you save an incredible deal of color that you would otherwise have wasted in constant scratching out. You ought to try it, Angelica."

"Thank you. Every one has his manner, and my ideas never come to me until I see them first upon the canvas.

But listen, Rosenbusch, does this dry mental painting take up all your time? Couldn't you steal a few hours in the day for outside work? A young officer's widow has given me an order for a portrait of her husband, who fell at Kissingen, to be inclosed in a wreath of laurels, cypresses, and passion-flowers—between ourselves, a regular sampler idea. Only think of it: the departed one on horseback, in the background the city; and around it all a wreath, like onions about a dish of sauerkraut and sausages. I let fall a few hints, as to whether it would not look better, perhaps, if we should leave out the wreath, or at most paint in the bust of the deceased? But no, it would not do to leave out the horse, he might almost have been said to have been one of the family, the widow declared—a beautiful bay stallion with a white star; and he had also died in consequence of a wound. As the times are bad and the lady did not find the price I asked any too high, I accepted the commission. I immediately said to myself, it is nonsense; the horses that you paint look a good deal like hippopotamuses, so you can't get it done without Rosenbusch's help; and as he is now at work on his great picture—but still, as you are only painting it in your head—”

She turned away, so that he should not see the sly look that flashed over her round face. But, in his wretched state of body and mind, all his sharpness had left him.

“You know, Angelica,” said he, “that if I were painting the battles of Alexander, I would always have time enough left for you. Besides, one nag won't be anything of a job. I shall paint him with wide-spread nostrils snuffing at the wreath, as though the laurels that beckoned to his master had excited his own appetite.

Symbolical allusions like that can give an interesting air even to the most foolish picture."

"Will you have the goodness to dispense with all your jokes? The matter is serious, the picture is to be placed on a sort of household altar in the widow's sleeping-chamber, and a night-lamp is to be kept constantly burning before it. So, if you will undertake to do the figures, including, of course, the portrait of the officer—a photograph of the horse is also to be sent to me to-day—I will paint a wreath around them, and we will go shares in the fame and money."

She named twice the sum she had asked. For she was determined to let him have the whole, which would be no inconsiderable sum for him in his present state. But to her alarm he did not show the slightest joy at this un-hoped-for income.

"My dear friend," he said, "the two departed ones shall be painted, and I promise you they shall bear as close a resemblance to a fallen hero and a defunct war-horse as any sorrowing widow could possibly wish. I will also, if you insist upon it, paint my monogram on the nag's saddle-cloth, so that we may figure together in art-history, like Rubens and Blumenbreughel. But you alone must have the money. I will never consent to be paid in vile lucre for acts of friendship, especially toward a lady, and above all toward an honored patroness and neighbor. And, by the way, we can commence at once; I have come to a halt in my composition—particularly as I have a cold in my head—and as one finally gets quite confused merely from the number of good thoughts that come to him—therefore, if you please—"

He approached with arm gracefully bent, in order to escort her over to her studio.

Angelica knew him well enough to feel sure that nothing in the world would shake him in the resolution he had taken; and, since everything that was chivalrous in his character flattered her hidden liking, she made no attempt to dissuade him. She would find some way of recompensing him for his trouble without offending his sense of courtesy, and a great deal had already been won in inducing him to go to work again and to come into a heated room.

There, to be sure, he was obliged to take off his shawl and appear in the unlucky dress-coat which, having been intended for Rossel's rounded proportions, hung very loosely about his shrunken limbs. However, he was not in the least embarrassed by this, but proceeded to explain to his friend, with the greatest seriousness, the advantage of having one's clothes too large. In the summer they were airy, for they caught the wind; in the winter they retained a larger supply of warm air—a movable wadding, as it were, between the body and the cloth—while they were much warmer in an unheated room, especially when covered by a shawl, on account of their having so much more material. He delivered this lecture over a cup of tea which Angelica had prepared for him, and which evidently restored to his inner man the warmth he had so long been without. As he was never more active than when he was working for others, the rough sketch of the equestrian portrait was completed in a few hours, and so skillfully set in Angelica's border of flowers that, as she expressed it, the whole picture looked "quite crazy enough," and they were able to proceed at once to the shading.

Over this common labor, that afforded them both great pleasure and gave occasion for innumerable jests,

the forenoon had slipped away unheeded. Angelica proposed to take her dinner in her studio to-day, against which proposition Rosenbusch had nothing to object. She dispatched the janitor with a few secret commissions, and in a short time had improvised such an excellent meal that Rosenbusch burst out in great enthusiasm.

CHAPTER IV.

THIS was the first day for many weeks on which he had felt warm, and as if he had enough to eat. Consequently he only made a few weak protests when Angelica insisted upon furnishing him his meals so long as their common labor lasted, and even made as though he did not notice that she acted like a very Penelope, and again and again put off the completion of the work under one pretext or another. However, the picture was finished at last, and Rosenbusch, who had in the mean while grown quite plump, would have been obliged to fall back again on his fasting and brooding, had not his friend taken care to provide for him without his knowledge.

She succeeded in bringing it about that all the friends of the inconsolable widow became possessed by a desire to have the effigy of their dead or living husbands, done in the same way. Thus it happened that our battle-painter was all at once completely overwhelmed with orders for equestrian portraits, whereat he flew into a great passion, for the modern uniforms were very much at variance with his Wouverman tendencies. However, there were always the horses to fall back on, and upon these he could labor

with a good conscience, though he was always complaining that the modern prejudices in regard to horse-breeding had exterminated the majestic Flemish and Burgundian breeds. He painted away at them with great zeal, "for his meals," as he expressed it, and it was only when the approach of twilight forced him to leave off that he allowed himself the pleasure of going round to his neighbors, and inveighing against this servile labor to which his great work was being sacrificed.

Angelica never replied to his complaints by a single word. She had said once for all that she thought there was nothing unworthy in his painting military portraits by the dozen, provided he could get respectable prices for them; and in support of this she referred him to some famous examples. But, in order that she might get him to work again upon some larger task, she persuaded the young widow to give him an order for the bombardment of Kissingen, at which her husband had fallen.

But in this case she had reckoned without her host. He absolutely refused to paint so prosaic an affair as the bombardment of a modern city, by modern troops who lay under cover and fired their cannon unseen. Besides, he had not been present at the affair. Had he taken part in person at the battle of Lützen? asked Angelica, maliciously. No; but that was not a parallel case at all. Everybody would like to have been present at such a glorious hand-to-hand fight as that, and would, therefore, feel grateful to the artist who did his best to fix on canvas the rearing chargers, the trumpeters blowing their bugles, and the foot soldiers charging and dealing blows to right and left with all their might. Modern battles, on the other hand, showed to quite as much advantage on the maps of the general staff, where one could follow on

the table the scientifically-planned moves and counter-moves by geometrical lines and different-colored little flags.

He could not be dissuaded from this, for on some subjects even Angelica's influence over him had its limits. But the more she scolded him for his obstinacy, and the more unsparing she was of her forcible expressions, the better pleased she was at heart that he showed himself so independent, so manly, and so unreasonable; and she often had hard work to keep from falling out of her rôle and throwing her arms around his neck.

She was less satisfied with the persistency with which he clung to his quiet melancholy, even after the beautiful weather had come, and there was no longer any lack of money, and his loose dress-coat had long since been exchanged for a natty summer jacket. She attributed this dejection of one who was generally so light-hearted to his affair with the beautiful Nanny, of which, contrary to his habit, he never spoke to her, but which, as she knew, had not turned out very satisfactorily. And so for many a day she sat dejectedly before her easel, listening to catch the slightest sound from her friend's silent studio, where, even now, the flute gave forth no music; while from the deserted rooms below no sound of mallet and chisel nor any other sound of life reached her ear.

In the mean while, as we have said, summer had come. Rossel had invited old Schoepf and his granddaughter to his villa on the lake. But as the old man did not think it would be just the thing for him to go and live with the girl under a bachelor's roof, and as she herself would not listen to the proposal for a moment, our "Fat Rossel" also remained in town, an arrangement, by-the-way, that was far more agreeable to him. Kohle alone took up his

quarters with old Katie, in order to paint his allegory of Venus on the wall. The foster-mother had returned from Florence with a whole trunkful of articles of art and ornament for Angelica, and a thousand greetings from the happy pair. She was never tired of telling about the beautiful life the two were leading: how Herr Jansen had begun some wonderful new works; how the Frenchmen and Englishmen had gone wild over them; and how happy little Frances was with her beautiful mamma. She had also seen the baron and Irene, but nothing had as yet been heard of the young baron.

These accounts had greatly excited the good soul of our friend. Long after the cheerful little woman had gone, Angelica sat at the table on which she had spread out Julie's presents, the photographs taken from the pictures of the Tribuna, the mosaic brooch and the beautiful silks, and sadly reflected whether she would not have done better if she had crossed the Alps when she was asked, instead of staying here at home and torturing her soul with the pangs of a hopeless love.

Just then she heard Rosenbusch rush whistling upstairs with unusual haste. Immediately after he entered her studio. His face had the same thoughtless, dare-devil expression that it used to have in his most flourishing days, when he still wore his violet-velvet coat.

"What news do you bring, Rosenbusch?" asked the painter, who was as little pleased with his jollity as she had been before with his dejection. "You look as if you had just made a great find, a genuine Wouverman at some salt-dealer's, or the red cloth of which Countess Terzky dreamed in Eger. Well?"

"My honored friend," he remonstrated, "you wrong me, as usual. What I bring is not antiquities, but two

very important items of news, a serious and a comic one. Which do you wish to hear first ? ”

“ First the serious one. You alarm me, Rosenbusch. Why, you really look quite solemn.”

“ It is a devilish serious matter ; there is war, real, genuine war, though the whole thing sounds so absurd that, in spite of the declaration by France that you can read in all the papers, one feels almost tempted to bet that it is a newspaper hoax. What do you say now, Angelica ? Is that piece of news serious enough for you ? ”

“ Gracious heavens ! ” cried Angelica, “ what an absurdity ! ”

“ That is a very wise remark of yours, my respected friend ; but it can’t be helped ; on account of just such absurdities the most sensible men have lost their lives and whole nations their blood and treasure. To be sure, there must be wars, else how would the battle-painters live ? However, you know my sentiments on that subject. Considering the present system of artillery battles and rapid firing, you may be sure it isn’t for the sake of art that I am going.”

“ You going to the war ? You don’t know what you are talking about, Rosenbusch ! You a warrior and hero ? That is undoubtedly your second item of news, the comic one, I mean.”

“ You are again mistaken, and of course to my disadvantage, my dear patroness. The second item has nothing whatever to do with the first ; on the contrary, if we must regard the first as a public calamity, we can call the second a joyful private occurrence : Fräulein Nanny and Herr Franz Xavier Niederhuber are announced as engaged ; the wedding is to take place in three weeks.”

His face had not lost its indifferent expression while he spoke these words, but yet there was something about his voice as if everything were not yet quite right.

"My dear friend," she said, at last. "I have been so little *au courant* of your affairs of the heart for the last few months, that I really do not know whether I ought to congratulate you or to assure you of my silent sympathy. I must tell you frankly, though, that of all your lovesick moods I never could understand this passion of yours for that insignificant, coquettish, and not particularly attractive little doll—" (Even now, when the faithless one had ceased to be dangerous, Angelica's jealousy vented itself in this harsh criticism.) "And now for your grief at having found out such a little hypocrite to drive you into the jaws of a park of artillery, belching forth death and destruction—"

"It isn't that at all," he interrupted, with a heavy sigh. "It isn't any sardonic mood that makes me think this vengeance of fate absurd. For all I care she may make her brewer's son happy, and prefer his beer and brewery horses to my oil and chargers. That unfortunate love of mine has long ceased to be anything but a spectre, a mere phantom, as is shown most clearly by the verses I have composed about it. Elfinger told me to my face long ago: 'You don't love her at all; the stronger the love, the weaker the love poems, and yours are unusually good this time!' Nevertheless, Angelica, you are not altogether wrong in supposing that I am going off to the war on account of an unhappy passion. It is the same hopeless affection that has robbed me of my usual good spirits for some time past. But what's the odds? The powder that is to remedy this folly has been invented at last!"

"*Another* unhappy love affair? Oh, you wretch! I could almost take sides with the beautiful Nanny; she must have found out what a butterfly with blue-velvet wings was fluttering around her!"

"Well, whether what she did was right or wrong, she certainly conferred a great favor upon us both by acting as she did. But, just because I tried to retain my constancy as long as I possibly could, I grew melancholy when I found how much difficulty I had in feeling the slightest pain at the faithlessness of this young daughter of the Philistines—of this Delilah for whom I once cut off my beard and flowing locks. And even though I have been perhaps unduly led, by my sense of justice, to do homage to different styles of beauty at the same time or in rapid succession—I am punished now more cruelly than I have deserved. However, there is no help for it. It is to be hoped it won't last long. It is true that as volunteer nurses, for as such we are going to report ourselves (for Elfinger can't stand it any longer either), we shan't at once get into the heaviest fire; and of course no one can expect for a moment that we would enter as privates at this late day, and go through a course of drill, and then follow after the rest when the sport is all over. But during the battle, when all is confusion, when human beings are bowled down like lead soldiers, perhaps there will be a stray bullet for one of us—"

"Don't talk in that godless way, Rosenbusch! It is very noble and brave of you to want to go with the rest; it certainly does you honor. But, because it is such a holy cause, do leave your jests behind you; forget 'all lighter trifling, dalliance sweet,' and—and when you are in the field—and really—"

She suddenly broke off. The thought that he was go-

ing to leave her, that he would be surrounded by dangers and might stand in need of her help, came over her with such force that she had all she could do to restrain her tears.

He was gazing at the ground with a sad face, and had not noticed her emotion.

"You are in one of your jesting moods again," he said, staring at a large photograph of the Cellini "Perseus." "And I willingly give you permission to ridicule all my former 'amours and courtesies,' and to look upon them as Ariostian sports, springing from pure love of adventure. But, you shall not lay hand on this, my last and lasting passion. It is of a very different calibre; and, though I dare not mention its name to you, I am sure you would yourself admit that this flame has nothing in common with the Nannies, Annies, and Barbaras that I once loved. But I won't be such a fool as to take you into my confidence. Then, indeed, you would let out upon me the vials of your raillery, and I am anxious that we should part good friends."

"You speak in riddles, Rosenbusch. If you really should lose your reason in a sensible way—I mean over a subject that is worth the trouble—why should I make fun of you?"

"Because—but no, it is useless to say any more about it. Do tell me, for Heaven's sake! would you have believed this Monsieur Ollivier to have been capable of such a vile performance, such a piece of silly defiance—like a corps-student 'renowning it?' A man that only a little while ago—"

"No dodging, Herr von Rosebud. You have told me too much for you to try and put a seal on your lips now. As a woman, and as your true, sincere friend, it is not only

my right but my duty to be curious. Out with it—who is this latest flame?—and if I can aid you by word or deed—”

Her voice grew unsteady again. She did not dare to look at him. He, too, let his eyes wander around the studio in another direction.

“If you positively insist upon knowing,” he stammered, at last—“and, after all, there’s nothing to be lost or gained by my telling you—the person of whom I speak is the only female being to whose peace of mind I can’t imagine myself in any way dangerous—I couldn’t imagine it even in a dream. It is impossible for her to feel toward me either love or hate. She has given me unmistakable proof of this—partly by constantly scolding, railing, and mocking at me, partly by the kindest and most brotherly friendship—such as one only shows to a person when one is absolutely certain that one can never fall in love with him. I ought to have been warned by this, and have taken better care of my heart. But, just because such a relation was quite new to me, I fell into it blindfold, and now I am plunged up to my ears in the most hopeless, most undying, and most imprudent passion. There you have my confession. I think you will dispense with my mentioning to you the name of the person in question. But I won’t detain you longer. I see you have your palette ready to go to work. *Adieu!*”

He turned toward the door. But he had not crossed the threshold when his name reached his ear—and his heart, too, because of the unusually tender tone in which it was pronounced. He stood as if rooted to the spot, and waited to hear what more the voice would say. But he had to wait a good while, so he spent the intervening time in observing the wall, which separated this room

from his own, and which was large enough to easily admit of a door being cut through.

"Dear Rosenbusch," the voice began again, at last, even a little more tenderly than before. "What you have said is so new, so entirely unexpected to me—and then, again, so confusing—come, let us talk about it like a couple of sensible people and good comrades—"

He again made a movement as though he were going. The beginning did not strike him as being particularly consoling. "Sensible discussion and good-fellowship!"—if she had nothing better than that to offer him—

"No," she continued; "hear me out, first. You are always so hasty, Rosenbusch! If you will only promise me not to be offended at anything I say—for I would like to be perfectly frank. Will you promise me?"

He nodded rapidly three times in succession, and gave her an almost timid look; and then hastily looked down again. In the midst of her own confusion and embarrassment she could not help smiling at the shy, penitent air of one who was usually such a self-confident lady-killer.

"I can't deny," she said, "that in the first part of our acquaintance I really did not think much of you; you were—pardon me for saying it—rather disagreeable than dangerous to me. The very name of Rosenbusch sounds so perfumed and sentimental—"

"Well!" he ventured to interpose, "Minna Engelken is also a devilish sweet name!"

"But, still, it doesn't sound so Jewish. I took you for a Jew in disguise."

"We have been baptized these hundred years, and my grandmother came from a Christian family, and was a Fräulein Fliedermüller."

"Then, besides, I found you too—how shall I say?—too 'pretty' for a man, and the others all said you were amiable. Pretty and amiable men have always been intolerable to me. They are generally conscious of it, and contemplate themselves in the glass at moments when they are not watched, and comb their beard and even their eyebrows. And all the while they care for no one but themselves ; and, if they pretend to grow sentimental over a woman, it is done in such a way that the unfortunate person thus favored would rather receive a box on the ear than such homage, if her heart is in the right place. Don't get angry, Rosenbusch ; it isn't your fault that you have such a pretty little nose and are so amiable—for that you really are. But you will understand ; an old girl who is no longer pretty, and who never was considered amiable—"

"Oh, Angelica !—"

"No, you mustn't interrupt me. It would be very stupid of me if I were not wise enough to know how I look, and what impression I make upon people after having had nearly thirty years in which to make my own acquaintance. How old are you, Rosenbusch ?"

"I shall be thirty-one on the fifth of August."

"Then there is scarcely thirteen months difference between us. Don't you see, that in itself is an objection ? But to proceed : your flute-playing, your white mice, your many love-affairs ; can you blame me for looking upon you as a man who was not in the slightest degree dangerous—to me, at least ? I had formed a very different idea of the man who was to win my heart, and, if I chanced to find such a one, I knew at once that it would be an unfortunate affair if I regarded the matter seriously. For such men want very different wives, and in that they are quite

right. So I intrenched my poor soul behind my sense of humor, and, as you see, that was both a good and a bad thing to do ; good, because it has helped me over many a bitter hour ; bad, because it made me appear even less amiable than I really am at bottom. A woman who has humor, who does not weigh each of her words—where are the men who still believe that a good, womanly heart lies behind it all ? The conceited men, like yourself, for instance, are especially repelled by such a one. Unless we cower in sweet bashfulness before your great words and beards, we are not worthy to be loved by your great souls. For that reason I was truly never more astonished by anything than by what you have just said to me. It is true, that since—well, for some time past I will say—I have gained a very different opinion of you ; it is my duty to confess this to you after having so candidly told you the rest to your face. I have learned to esteem you highly, Rosenbusch ; I—I even believe I must make use of a stronger expression ; I have conceived a hearty love and affection for you—no, you mustn't interrupt me by a single word, it must all come out first. Do you know, on that night when you behaved so naughtily—you recollect it, don't you ?—you took a liberty which you regarded merely as the toll of gallantry, but which a girl who has any respect for herself—though I have no prudish notions about such things when people are really in love with one another—and that was it that made me feel so badly, because you took such a liberty without really loving me ; and I believe I didn't close an eye half that night, and that I shed many secret tears, because—because, do what I would, I couldn't be angry with you for it !”

“Angelica !” he cried, eagerly, approaching to seize her hand, which, however, she instantly drew back.

"Why do you speak this way, if you will not make me happy—if you will not even let me kiss your hand? No, I won't be kept from speaking any longer; for, no matter how much about my bad qualities you may still have on your conscience, you can no longer deny that you like me, that you think well of me; and that is the main thing and a thousand times better than I ever dared to hope. Dearest, best Angelica, only try and believe that even a thirty-one-year-old battle-painter can improve. I will stop up my flute with lead, I will give my mice strychnine in a piece of Swiss cheese, and will wear a covering over my nose so that the children shall run away at sight of me. And, finally, in regard to my love-affairs—do you really believe I am so wanting in taste, to say nothing of all nobler motives, as to have eyes for such every-day doll-faces, after having found in your countenance the image of all love and goodness, of all wisdom and grace?"

In the mean while he got possession of one of her hands and pressed it so earnestly, at the same time gazing into her face with such true-hearted, mischievous eyes, that she grew quite red and came very near losing her firmness. However, she quickly recovered herself again and said:

"You are a truly dangerous man, Rosenbusch. I begin to realize that now from my own experience. If I did not call to my aid all the little sense and self-consciousness I possess, we should now fall into one another's arms, and ruin would take its course. One more name would stand on your list; you would go to the war, and there, in the great events that go to make up the history of the world, you would find the very best excuse for letting this little affair of the heart drop completely out of your memory. No, my friend, I think too much of my-

self for that. I confidently believe that my respected person has merely become of importance in your eyes, because I have heretofore withstood your amiability in a perfectly incomprehensible way. As soon as you should become convinced that I too am only a weak woman, I should become a matter of great indifference to you. Now, it is true, my stupid honesty has prevented me from concealing this from you ; but I don't regard myself as hopelessly lost even yet. Now, if you go to the war, we shall both be equally well off. We shall both have ample time and opportunity for forgetting one another. I, to be sure, here alone in this deathly quiet house, where I hear nothing but the squeak of your mice—I shall have somewhat the harder time. But perhaps some other dangerous youth will move into your quarters—a dark-complexioned Hungarian or Pole—I have always had a partiality for brunettes, and for that reason alone it is a great mistake for me to love you with your red beard."

She had to turn her head away, it was impossible for her to conceal her emotion any longer by forced jests. She stealthily pressed her curls against her overflowing eyes, but, nevertheless, she shook her head when he put his arm around her and drew her to his breast.

"No, no !" she whispered ; "I don't believe it even now. You shall see it will turn out badly. It's so silly of my stupid tears to give the lie to my wisest words ; and then, too, my foolish heart, that ought to be old enough not to let itself be deluded—"

On the evening of the same day Angelica wrote a long letter to Julie.

After she had relieved her heart of a thousand things

that concerned her friend alone, and had arrived at the end of the twelfth page, she finally summoned up all her courage, took a fresh sheet, and wrote the following post-script :

“To tell you the truth, I was going to be so cowardly and deceitful as to send off this letter without telling you of the great event of this day. I don’t mean the declaration of war by France, which will be an old story by the time this letter comes into your hands, but the offensive and defensive alliance that I have to-day concluded. With whom, I should very much prefer you should guess for yourself. But as it will be too long for me to wait before I can learn whether you have guessed rightly or not—and as one is said to lose in shrewdness what one gains in happiness—I will state at once that the artful man who has surprised my well-known firmness and prudence is no other than—Rosenbusch. I hope you are not so far-sighted as to see that in making this confession I blush to such an extent as to do all honor to my future name—though my rosiness is of a somewhat faded sort. Oh, dearest ! what is our heart ? It really seems as though that inexplicable and irresponsible something within us that controls the blood in its course and makes the hand cold or warm if we place it in that of another, exists almost independently of all those other forces which govern that little world we call the individual. How often have I made this dear fellow-creature the butt of my merciless sallies ! How often, when alone with you, have I caricatured his weaknesses and human frailties—to be sure he has changed very much since you last saw him—and made merry over this rat-catcher with his flute and blue-velvet coat ! And all the while my heart sat in its cell as still

as a mouse and made no movement ; nay, even my conscience did not rebel at the godless way in which I denied that love we are commanded to feel toward our fellow-creatures. And now all of a sudden—

‘Frailty, thy name is woman!’

Oh, dearest ! do promise me to forget all my malicious sayings just as quickly as possible, and to believe that I had long been convinced of the critical state of my heart, even before this bad man confessed his feelings to me. I did not write you anything about it, because I naturally regarded the matter as a wretched piece of stupidity on the part of this above-mentioned heart, and even now I can’t quite believe in it. You know I never was very lucky in regard to real happiness. And for that reason I haven’t much faith even now ; if it is true that he loves me to distraction, as he declares he does, I feel convinced I shan’t get any enjoyment out of it, and he will be sure to get killed, for he is going off to the war as a volunteer nurse. And yet I have not tried to dissuade him from taking this manly step. You remember that my chief objection to him was that he wasn’t quite manly enough. And now, after all, his love is to be put to the test of fire, and we shall see whether he will bring it home uninjured from the smoke and horror of battle ! How shall I bear the separation ! I shall paint a few poor pictures and get a few gray hairs, and then when he comes back he will realize clearly what a mistake he has made. But, as God wills ! I’ll bear it quietly. The times are so great, who has the right to think of his or her poor person ? All is enthusiasm ; Elfinger is going too (his little nun seems to have driven him to desperation), and, what will rejoice you, Schnetz has joined his old regiment again, and looks

upon life like a new man. It touched me to hear our good Kohle, who paid me a visit this morning, curse his poor health, which shut him out from all the hardships of war. He has designed a splendid tableau : Germania on the summit of the Lurlei rock, from which she has cast down the enchantress in order to excite all her sons to battle against the enemy by her song of triumph. Rossel, who, of course, would be perfectly useless away from his rocking-chair, has at least subscribed a thousand gulden for the benefit of the wounded. Every one according to his strength. I shall make lint of my paint rags, and sacrifice my heart's blood for the cause in another way. Farewell ! Rejoice in your unclouded, paradisaical, peaceful life in the beautiful South ; and write to me soon, dearest, beautifullest, happiest, only sister mine ! Rosenbusch wishes to be remembered. A fortnight more—and then in this whole house, where so many dear ones have lived and labored, there will beat but one lonely heart—that of your

ANGELICA."

CHAPTER V.

WHEN that old earth-shaker Vesuvius grows tired of his peaceful slumbers and, breaking out into sudden fury, lights up the night far and wide with his flaming torch, till all around is bathed in purple—

" In Capri the Marina
And Naples Bay and Mergellina,"

—not only is the hut of the poorest vintager reddened by the terrible glow, but, in the yard behind, the water

bubbles in the well, and a man skilled in reading the signs can estimate the strength of the eruption from the boiling and steaming of this narrow, walled-up fountain with as much accuracy as from the surf of the open sea, that washes the foot of the buried cities.

So, too, are the changes of that light, which streams from those immortal deeds and sufferings that move the world, reflected in the lives of humble mortals; and it would be no slight task to trace out the signs of such a time not merely on the battle-field, but in the homes and huts of those who were left behind.

A psychological study of war, such as we may expect from some one better fitted for the task, will have to bring out this reverse side of the medal sharply and clearly. But the novel steps back modestly when its elder brother, the epic, in glittering armor and with clang of arms, enters once more upon the world's arena. Where every individual lot was so completely merged in the fate of the nation, we should give the reader but a poor idea of our friends if we showed them as busy with themselves, their personal aims, duties and interests. That each of them had proved himself ready, according to his manner and ability, Angelica's letter has already shown us. Therefore we are all the more sorry that the excellent writer herself did not quite rise to the level of the time.

It is true it never occurred to her to complain that the Eden-like condition of a life devoted to art, and removed from all worldly turmoil—where beauty is the highest aim of all striving, and that alone has the right to existence which is perfect in itself—had suddenly been destroyed, and had given place to a hard, merciless reality. Upon the whole she had a warm appreciation of the magnitude of the great historical issue at stake, and it filled her with

joyful enthusiasm to see how earnestly all who were connected with her, as well as the whole people, felt the force of the old proverb that one should make a virtue of necessity.

Yet in spite of all this her heart, usually so brave, was unable to preserve this heroic spirit, that sustained many a weaker one, through the long time of trial.

Even when taking leaving of Rosenbusch she had shown herself strong. She felt it her duty not to make heavy her parting lover's heart, but to give him, in her own person, an example of the way one should sacrifice one's dearest wishes on the altar of the fatherland, with smiling magnanimity. But this "*Pœte, non dolet*" revenged itself upon her. Scarcely was she alone, when she reproached herself for having pretended an unwomanly hardness and severity that was calculated to frighten away her sensitive friend, rather than to bring him nearer to her. She immediately wrote him a long letter, in which, for the first time, she confessed her great love for him without reserve; beseeching him in the most moving terms not to expose his life recklessly, sending him all her prescriptions for rheumatism and chafed feet, and entreating him to write to her at least once a week.

These weekly letters of his were now the only thing for which she seemed to live, aside from the mere mechanical activity with which she devoted herself to works of charity in the women's societies and on her own account. She never appeared among her friends except on those occasions when she had just received one of these letters from the front, and then she came running to old Schoepf, her cheeks glowing with joy, to tell him the latest news about Rosenbusch and Elfinger, and to have pointed out to her, on the special map that Rossel had

given the old man, the exact spot where her lover must now be. But for everything else she showed but slight interest, just as she seemed to have completely lost her humor.

She was only amusing when she came to speak about the *francs tireurs* and the treachery of the native inhabitants, by whom she was perpetually imagining her lover attacked, plundered, maltreated, or even killed, in spite of the red cross which she had made and sewed on his coat-sleeve with her own hands. On these occasions she indulged in such droll maledictions upon the Gallic national character, and recounted such incredible instances of her own cowardice and ghost-seeing, especially at night, that she finally had to join in with the laughter of the others, going home again with her heart somewhat lightened.

During all this war time she did not touch a brush. As nobody cared for flower pictures, it was evidently a saving for her to cut up her canvas and make use of it for sewing purposes, rather than to waste oil colors on it.

She never allowed any of the camp letters that her tender-hearted lover wrote her to be seen by any one else. They were love-letters, she said, and not newspapers, and belonged to her alone. Once only did she prevail upon her heart to part with one, in order to give her friend in Florence a pleasant Christmas surprise, for Julie knew that she could give away nothing in the world that was dearer to her than such a token of life and love from the hand of her betrothed. She accounted to Julie for the fact that this epistle, a comic rhymed affair in Rosenbusch's old light-hearted manner, sounded less tender than the others, by explaining that it was accompanied by an extra sheet in prose, which dealt with the intimate affairs of the heart. True to the profound saying of Elfinger—"The

stronger the love, the weaker the verses"—our lover had taken good care not to compose his actual love-letters in rhyme, for which Angelica felt grateful to him in her soul.

CHAPTER VI.

THE hard war winter was over; the spring had brought peace and the birth of a new German Empire; and midsummer saw the victorious host returning to its home.

It is just two years since that day when our story began. Once more it is hot and still in the Theresienwiese, so still that a flute concerto from the window of the studio building could be heard for a long distance around. But the flute is silent. Moreover, although it is a weekday, a Sunday calm hangs over the country round about. No roll of carriages is heard, and no people are seen hurrying busily through the streets of the suburb. Yet the great bronze maiden before the Ruhmeshalle does not seem surprised at this loneliness and quiet. It is true, without raising herself on tiptoe, she can look away over the houses of the city, to the gate on which stands a smaller likeness of herself in a chariot of victory, drawn by four stately lions with majestic heads and manes. And so she knows the reason why everything in her neighborhood appears as if it were dead. Just as the blood from the whole body streams swiftly to the centre of life, when some sudden stroke of fear or surprise reaches the heart, leaving the extremities paralyzed and lifeless, so the whole population had collected around that spot where their heart was to-day—the arch of triumph through which the conquerors were to enter. The great bronze

woman sees the flash of arms and the waving of flags on the high-road before any one else, and something like a smile flits across her tightly-shut lips. Any one who had been watching her closely at this moment would have seen that she raised her arm higher than usual, and slightly moved the wreath in her hand, as if in token of greeting to the triumphal procession. This occurred just as the bells rang out from all the church towers in the city, and a shout of joy from a hundred thousand throats announced the arrival of the advance guard.

Among the entering host are two faces well-known to us.

At the head of his regiment, which has left nearly half its number on the cold ground at Bazeilles and Orleans, and for that reason has to accept a double tribute of flowers from the windows on the right and left, rides Captain von Schnetz, his lank figure seated bolt upright in the saddle, his breast blazing with orders, and his whole person covered from head to foot with the bouquets which, aimed at the rider, have fallen off and been handed up to him by the boys that run along at his side. He has decorated his sword with them, and his helmet, and his pistols, and his horse's trappings, although usually he is no great admirer of flowers. Nor does he do this now for his own glorification or pleasure. But he knows that, at a window in the first story of that stately house over yonder, there sits a woman, thin and prematurely old, but whose cheeks, usually so pale, wear a joyous flush to-day, and whose eyes, grown faded through long suffering, beam once more with something of the brightness and hopefulness of youth. It is to this woman that he wants to show himself in his covering of flowers. Heretofore, she has worn a crown of thorns; now he wants to show

her the promising future he has won for himself and her. But she sees him from a distance only. When the good, honest, yellow-leather-colored face, with its black imperial, rides by, close to the house, her eyes are so bedimmed by tears that she only sees, as if through a veil, how he lowers his sword to her in salute, and bows slightly with his garlanded helmet. The wreath which she has held ready for him falls from her trembling hand over the railing upon the heads of the densely packed crowd below. But they seem to know for whom it is intended. In a second twenty hands have helped to pass it along to him, and now it is handed up to the rider, who lets all the others slide off his sword so that this one alone shall be wound about it.

Not far behind this brave soldier rides another, upon whom, likewise, the eyes of the women and girls in the windows gaze with pleasure, though he is a stranger to them all, and, for his part, very rarely lets his dark eyes rest on any of these blooming faces. For who is there here whom he cares to seek? And whose face would he be glad to see unexpectedly? It was only with great reluctance and in order not to offend Schnetz, who asked it of him as a particular proof of friendship, that he finally consented to take part in the entrance of the troops, and to visit once more the city which had so many bitter associations for him. These last two years—what a different man they had made of him! And yet—although he was firmly convinced that the source of every joy was dried up in his innermost heart, and that henceforth nothing was left to him but a barren satisfaction at duties conscientiously fulfilled—even he could not altogether escape the festal mood of this marvelous hour. His handsome face, made bolder and keener by the hard-

ships of war, lost the sad, hard expression which had never been absent from it during the whole year ; a bright determination, a quiet earnestness, beamed from his eyes. As he rode through the triumphal avenue strewn with flowers, amid the chime of bells and the wildest shouts of joy, he lost the consciousness of his own hopeless lot, and became merged, as it were, in the great, pervading spirit of a unique and sublime festival, which would never come again ; and to take part in which, with the Iron Cross on his breast, and honorable, scarcely healed wounds underneath, was a privilege which might well be thought to compensate for all the lost bliss of a young life.

After the entrance ceremonies were over, he wended his way toward the garden on the Dultplatz, where he thought there would be the least danger, to-day, of meeting any one of his acquaintances. Here, surrounded on all sides by the country-folk who had streamed into the city in great crowds, he sat in the shade of the ash-trees and, like a dream, the events of the last two years passed in review before him ; from that first Sunday afternoon when he dined here with Jansen and his new friends, down to the present moment, when he sat in the crowd solitary and alone, sought by no friendly eye, and merely stared at as one of that great host which had done honor to its fatherland.

The crowd in the garden had already begun to thin out a little when Schnetz touched the dreamer on the shoulder. He did not speak a word about the meeting he had just had with his wife ; but such an unwonted joyousness could be detected in his voice and bearing that for the first time Felix began to feel a quiet envy of this happy man, who had been expected and welcomed by some one whom he loved. He, for his part, would

have greatly preferred to leave the town again before night ; for after the first glow of enthusiasm was over, his spirits had once more become so gloomy that he would have given a great deal to escape from the festivities of the evening. But he had promised Schnetz a whole day, and he had too often been under obligations to his friend, in the hard days of trial that winter, not to grant him this small favor.

“Of course I will let you off from all ceremonial visits,” said his friend, as they left the garden arm-in-arm. “But we really must go and pay our respects to the invalids, and afterward shake hands with Fat Rossel. He would never forgive you if you didn’t think it worth while to congratulate him in his new state ; and, besides, it is all up with your *incognito*. At the window from which our friend Rossel viewed the spectacle sat another individual, who once upon a time took a great fancy to your worthy self, and who, notwithstanding the fact that her grandpapa and husband stood behind her, gave vent to her patriotic enthusiasm in the most unrestrained manner possible, throwing all the flowers in her basket at you at one go. But, of course you, like Hans the Dreamer, rode past your happiness all unconscious of it.”

“What, Red Zenz ? And she recognized me ? ”

“In spite of your uniform and short-cropped hair. But you must accustom yourself to a more respectful way of speaking of her. One speaks now of Frau Crescentia Rossel, *née* Schoepf. They wrote me about this affair a good while ago ; but as you refused, once for all, to listen to any news about Munich matters, I kept this event from you also. It must have come about curiously enough, and quite after the manner of the creature as she was then—I mean, before she had been tamed by the

yoke of wedlock. You know—or don't you know yet?—that Rossel lost his whole fortune some time ago. He had invested it with his brother, who was at the head of a mercantile firm in the Palatinate, carrying on a brisk trade with France. This brother became a bankrupt in consequence of the war, and our Fat Rossel would have become a miserably poor devil overnight if he had not owned the house in the city and the villa out there on the lake. He immediately sold the house with all its appurtenances, of course at a low enough figure, for no one had much money to spare in war time. But for all that it was such a good round sum, that the interest from it just succeeded in keeping his head above water, though he could no longer live like a *grand seigneur*. A purchaser might also have been found for the villa; but in order not to disturb our good Kohle, who was in the very midst of his Venus frescoes, he resisted the temptation, and—who would have thought it?—roused himself from his bear-skin to take up his brush again, though, to be sure, with much grumbling and cursing. This act of heroism seems to have melted, for the first time, the armor of ice in which the heart of the little red coquette was encased; particularly as he did not for a moment bemoan the loss of the property on his own account, but only expressed the deepest sympathy for his brother. To be brief, as he perceptibly pined away under all this, partly from love-sickness, partly because he had been obliged to dispense with the services of his all-too-sumptuous cook, this singular creature was touched with pity for his troubles, appeared one day in the scantily-furnished lodgings with which the former Sardnapalus was now forced to content himself, and announced to him, without any further ceremony, that she had been think-

ing the matter over, and was willing to marry him. She felt, to be sure, not a spark of sentimental love for him—such a love as that she had experienced but once in her life, and then it had gone badly with her—but she no longer felt any aversion toward him, and since he needed a wife who understood something about housekeeping, he had better go and make inquiries whether there wasn't another room and a kitchen to be had on the same floor, in which case they could go on living there.

“And they say the arrangement has really worked very well so far. Of course old Schoepf has gone to live with them ; and Uncle Kohle, who, in the mean while, has refused the hand of Aunt Babette, and has quietly gone on painting his Venus allegories in spite of Sedan and Paris, also sleeps and takes his meals there ; and Rossel paints one glorious picture after another, protesting all the while, they say, against this useless expenditure of strength, and longing for the time when he can finally settle down to rest. I have my private suspicions, however, that, in spite of all this talk, he is more contented with his present life, even leaving his marital joys out of the question, than with the barren seeds of thought which he, lying idly on his back, once scattered to all the winds of heaven.”

CHAPTER VII.

IN the mean while they had passed through the city, which was richly decked out with flags, wreaths and mottoes, while crowds of joyfully-excited people surged up and down the streets—and had arrived at the English garden.

"Where are you taking me to?" asked Felix. "There is no hospital within twenty miles of here, unless they have been turning the Chinese tower into one."

"Come along," answered Schnetz. "You'll soon get things straight. The queen-dowager selected the place herself, and no doubt many a poor fellow will make true the saying: '*hodie eris mecum in Paradiso.*'"

"In the Paradise garden? *In our Paradise?* The boldest imagination among us all could never have dreamed of such a thing as our meeting there again under such different circumstances."

"*Sic transit!*—And besides, our friends are, fortunately, much too lively a pair of birds of paradise not to fly away again some fine day."

When they reached the garden gate, they saw that all the benches under the trees were empty, although in all the other beer-gardens they had passed the people sat packed close together. An inscription indicated the different use to which the house was now devoted, and the few grave-looking people who met them—among the rest women with eyes red from weeping, leading little children by the hand, and further back in the garden the pale, tottering figures of convalescents—formed a sharp contrast to the noisy, merry crowd that was generally to be found here on holidays. The two friends walked thoughtfully round to the other side of the house, and, being in uniform, had no difficulty in obtaining admittance.

They had made the rounds of many a hospital-ward within the last year, and had seen the after-effects of the war in much more horrible pictures than any that clean, quiet rooms could offer them.

And yet now, when they beheld once more the halls

which they had left in the blaze of the carnival time, robbed of all their ornaments, and the sisters of charity moving softly up and down the long row of sick-beds, soothing a moan of pain here and mixing a cooling drink there ; and the grotesque frescoes on the bare walls no longer concealed by tall plants ; and outside the window the pure sunlight shimmering through the green tree-tops, instead of the midnight stars looking in upon a merry feast—such mingled feelings came over them that neither could utter a word.

They started to look for their friends. But strange faces only looked up at them from their beds of pain. Finally, a young doctor gave them the desired information.

The halls down below here were already full when the two gentlemen had been brought in. So they had willingly acceded to their request to have a room to themselves, and had quartered them in the top story. He offered to guide them up there himself ; but this Schnetz gratefully declined, not wishing to take him away from his patients.

So they mounted to the corridor of the top story, and at the very first door which they came to they heard a voice from the room within that caused them to start. It was a soft, girlish voice reading something aloud—verses, as it seemed.

“It isn’t likely they are in here,” muttered Schnetz, “unless they have been seized with a pious fit, and have consented to let a sister of charity come in and edify them with her hymn-book. Well, there have been instances.—But no, this hymn-book has never seen the inside of a church, at all events.”

They listened, and distinctly heard the lines.

“‘Holy Maid of Orleans, pray for us!’” cried Schnetz. “I must be greatly mistaken in my man, if Elfinger isn’t found somewhere near when Schiller is being spouted.”

Without stopping to knock, he softly opened the door, and entered with Felix.

It was a high but not a very large room, whose only window opened on the rear of the garden. Only a single ray of the afternoon sunshine streamed through the gray blind and fell upon one of the beds that stood near the wall on the right; while the other cot, opposite it, was surrounded by a high Spanish screen, and was pushed back so as to be entirely in the shade.

On the bed to the right lay Rosenbusch, covered over with a thin blanket, the upper part of his body propped up into a half-sitting posture by pillows, holding a sketch-book on his knees and busily engaged in drawing.

Except that his face was somewhat paler, he showed no traces of the hardships he had suffered; but on the contrary, his bright eyes beamed from under a red fez as merrily, and he looked as fresh as he lay there in his loose jacket, with his carefully-tended beard, as though he had made his toilet for the express purpose of receiving visits.

“I could have told you so!” he cried to his friends, as they entered (the reader who sat behind the screen was silent in an instant)—“the first visit of the saviours of the fatherland, on this day of triumph, is to the invalid’s paradise. God greet you, noble souls! You find us here as well provided for as if we were in the lap of Abraham; art, poetry, and love, make our life beautiful, and the fare is ample; though, unfortunately, we are on invalids’ diet. No, you mustn’t look at what I am scribbling. Or rather, for all I care, you may look at the thing as much as you

like. A Rosenbusch, *seconda maniera*, or *terza* rather, if I count in my classical period, my parting of Hector and Iphigenia *à la* David. Now, as you see, we are splashing about in realism of the most modern sort—Father Wou-vernman will turn in his grave, but I can't help that. And, after all, this pack of Turcos and Zouaves are by no means to be despised. Magnificent contrasts of color, set off by the vineyard scenery, and our own blue devils over there—like a thunder-cloud. By Jove! it won't look bad, will it? Do you know what the secret of modern battle-painting is, the clew to the riddle, to find which I had first to have a hole shot in my thigh? The episode, my dear fellow, nothing but the episode. Grouping in masses, tricks of tactics—nonsense, a map would do just as well for that purpose. But to condense in an episode the prevailing character of a whole battle—that is the point. Those old fellows had an easy time of it, for in those days a great, murderous battle was nothing but a handful of episodes. Well, every man must accommodate himself to the length of his blanket."

"Yours is long enough to keep you warm, old comrade-in-arms," replied Schnetz, examining the ingenious sketch with great pleasure. "But how goes it with your bodily progress?"

"Thanks. Fairly. In six or eight weeks I hope to prove myself quite a lively dancer at my own wedding. I only wish," he added, in a lower voice, with a slight movement of the head toward the other bed—"that our friend over opposite had such bright prospects—"

"Herr von Schnetz!" they now heard Elfinger's sonorous voice say from behind the screen—"You seem to have completely forgotten that there are other people living on the other side of the mountain. Whom have you

brought with you? To judge from the step it is our brave baron. Won't the gentlemen be so kind as to do a poor blind man the honor? You will find some one else here who will be very glad to welcome my old friends again."

At the first sound of these cheerful words, which moved him painfully, Schnetz had stepped behind the screen and seized the hands the sick man gropingly held out to him. Felix, too, approached. Elfinger could not raise his head from the pillow on account of the ice compress that was laid across both eyes, but the pale, finely-formed face beneath it lit up with such a joyful smile, that the two friends were so moved they could hardly stammer out the necessary words of greeting.

A slim young figure had risen from the chair at the head of the bed to make room for the gentlemen. She still held in her hand the book from which she had been reading, and her delicate face blushed when Schnetz turned and cordially pressed her hand.

"I need not introduce you to one another," said Elfinger. "Baron Felix, too, will probably recollect my little Fanny, from having met her at that memorable boating party. In those days we two were not so well acquainted with one another as we are now, for, as you know, 'it must be dark for Friedland's stars to shine.' I still had one eye too many. It is only since I have been left quite in the darkness that she has clearly seen that her heavenly bridegroom would not be angry with her for being unfaithful to him in order to light a poor blind cripple through life. Isn't it so, sweetheart?"

"Don't boast in such a godless way," they heard Rosenbusch call out, "as if it were on your account, *pour tes beaux yeux*, as messieurs our hereditary enemies say,

that she became converted and joined our society. Nonsense ! Fräulein Fanny, it is simply because you have to do penance for your faithless sister, and redeem the honor of the Munich women."

"Be quiet over there, most fickle of mortals," cried Elfinger ; "or I'll complain of you to Angelica. You must know they take turns in nursing us, these two good angels ; and although that frivolous man opposite ought to thank God that such an excellent woman has finally received him into grace, he is perpetually making love to my sweetheart over the screen. Fortunately, I have, once and for all, said good-by to jealousy, which would certainly be ridiculous enough in a blind man—"

"I hope you exaggerate, Elfinger," interrupted Felix ; "when we took leave of one another in Versailles the doctor gave us great reason to hope—"

"The way was a trifle long, and the snow-storm that welcomed us home to our fatherland—pshaw ! If it is so, and I only have enough twilight left for me to recognize the outlines of a certain face when it is close to mine, I will be happy. But even if this is no longer possible, ought I not to count my lot fortunate ? 'I had it once—' I tell you I can recall all the faces I loved as distinctly as if I had a pair of perfect eyes in my head—" he felt for the hand of the blushing girl and pressed it to his lips. "And now," he said, "enough about my respected self. Since we last saw one another the most wonderful events have come to pass. The German empire and the German emperor ! Good God, we praise Thee ! Do you know, since all this happened I have begun to have some hope for the German stage again ?"

"At all events, your colleagues have learned how to play the rôle of heroes respectably well, without opening

their mouths wide, rolling their eyes, and sawing the air with their arms and legs."

"No, but seriously, do you remember our first conversation on this subject, my dear baron? Now just see whether I haven't cause for hope. Our want of unity was chiefly to blame for the wretched state of our stage. Imagine thirty-six court-theatres fighting with one another for the few actors who really have talent. Now, my idea is that, when they have become a little sick of military spectacles up there in the imperial capital, they will arrive at the conclusion that a great nation also needs a national theatre; not one in name, but one which shall really unite all the best talents. A model manager, a model repertoire, and model performances, not given oftener than, at the most, two days running; and not with one eye on Melpomene and Thalia, and the other on the cash-box, so that a miserable clap-trap piece will be allowed to remain on the desecrated boards thirty consecutive nights, merely because a few actresses change their dresses seven times in the course of the performance. Only the very choicest pieces must be selected, from the classical and modern stock, and the parts must be filled only by the strongest actors. All real talent must be engaged at any price, though there should be three Franz Moors and Ophelias playing against one another at the same time; and the whole must be emancipated from all court influence, and regarded as an imperial affair under the charge of the Minister of Culture, who should be responsible to the nation. What do you say to such a stage?"

"That it will continue to be too fine for this world for some time to come," answered Schnetz. "But who knows? Even this world can improve; we have seen how it has done in other fields. I only fear that, even

under the most favorable circumstances, the other Germans will respectfully decline to give money, *in majorem imperii gloriam*, for a theatre of which the Berliners alone will reap the benefit."

"Naturally," cried Elfinger, gesticulating excitedly ; "and they would have a perfect right to do so. For that very reason my plan is to make this model stage accessible to all the empire. What else do we have railroads for, and the gala-performances that have been attempted here and there? All that is necessary is that it should be made a regular institution. Six winter months in Berlin, a month's vacation, four months' of triumphal progress of the imperial actors through all the cities of Germany in which a worthy temple of the muses can be found, then another month of rest, and so on with grace *in infinitum*. Don't say a word against it ! The thing has its difficulties, but, when we shall have gotten our theatrical Bismarck, you will see how well it will work, and then everybody will wonder why it was not thought of long before. Isn't it natural that the talent for impersonation should also grow richer among a people who have finally won self-respect, who have learned how to walk, and to stand, and to talk as well as the rest of the world ? I—of course, I have retired from the scene. But, nevertheless, I can work for it. I will give instruction in declamation ; I will open the minds of the young actors ; I will show them how to recite verses and bring style into their prose—you know rhapsodists always have been blind from time immemorial—and with the aid of my little wife here, and of my tremendous memory—"

At this moment the young doctor came in. He had heard Elfinger's earnest speech outside in the corridor, and

came to warn him not to over-excite himself. His friends took leave at once.

"I hope you won't leave Munich without having seen Angelica again," said Rosenbusch. Felix, though he would greatly have preferred not to look up any one else, had to promise that he would call on her. He did not notice the peculiarly sly look which the painter bestowed upon Schnetz. Still, although he believed he should not see these two good friends again, he left them with a comforted feeling. He knew that each, after his own fashion, had attained the goal of all his wishes.

CHAPTER VIII.

OUTSIDE, they were swallowed up again in the roaring and surging human stream, and borne toward the city. The old countess drove past them in a very elegant open carriage, her daughter by her side, and her son and son-in-law on the back seat, both in uniform and decorated with medals of honor. The happy old woman, who was taking the fresh glories of her family out for a ride, and gazing around her with proud eyes, recognized Schnetz immediately, and nodded to him with amiable familiarity. She looked at his companion through her eye-glass, but did not appear to know him.

"Brave youngsters," muttered Schnetz. "Whatever else you may say of them, they certainly fought well. But now let's take a drosky. Of course, our young husband lives outside there where the last houses are."

As they drew up before Rossel's quarters—a plain little house in the Schwanthalerstrasse—they caught sight

of a woman's head at the flower-framed window above ; but it was instantly drawn in again.

"Madame is at home," said Schnetz, with a smile. "Of course, she has been expecting your visit, and has probably arrayed herself in great style. Hold on tight to your heart, *triumphator!*"

Upon arriving up-stairs, they were not received by the lady of the house herself, as he had expected, but by a servant-girl, who conducted them into the studio. In comparison with the luxuriously-furnished room in which their friend used to recline on his picturesque bear-skin in his own house, this one was very scantily decorated. There were no costly Gobelin tapestries, beautiful bronze vases, and brilliantly-polished pieces of furniture in the style of the Renaissance. But on some of the easels stood pictures in various stages of completion, and the artist himself advanced to meet them, in his shirt-sleeves and with his palette on his arm.

"So here you are again!" he cried. "Now thanks be to all the gods that you have come back with sound limbs and unscratched faces! You have a fine piece of work behind you. Nor have we stay-at-homes been lazy in the mean while; and though not fighting for emperor and empire, we can at least say of ourselves that we have been working *pour le roi de Prusse*. But it makes no odds, let us hope for better times; in the mean while I am trying to drive away the blues with this daubing. For Heaven's sake, don't look at the things; they are wretched efforts, merely made in order to try my brush again. For that matter, you mustn't look about you here at all—*quantum mutatus ab illo!* Of all my household goods, I have retained nothing but my Boecklin; a thing of that sort is like a tuning-fork when one has lost the key-note.

Neither must you inspect me too closely. I am reduced, my dear fellows, very much reduced. You see I have shrunk to unnatural proportions ; what has become of my rounded form ? But, what could be expected when a man gets to work by eight o'clock every day, and so violates his holiest principles ? But wait, I will go and call my wife. She is the thing best worth seeing in the whole house."

He made his friends sit down on a small leather sofa that bore little resemblance to the celebrated "West-easterly" divan of former days, and ran out calling for his wife. In the mean while, they had time to look around. So much that was excellent met their view on all the canvases—such clearness, and simplicity in form and color—that they were moved to sincere enthusiasm, and eagerly expressed their delight to one another.

"You are too good," Rossel's voice rang out behind them. "It is possibly true that, in the course of time, I have become a passably good colorist. It isn't for nothing that a man refrains from his own sins for ten years, and has no other thoughts than to get at the secrets of the great. But so long as no one cares a rap about it, it remains a barren, private delight, and finally withers like a plant in a cellar. Who cares, nowadays, whether human flesh like this looks fresh, or as if it had been tanned ? The subject, the idea, and now, to cap the climax, the patriotic sentiment—no offense, my heroes ! Even in that way we can drag ourselves out of the slough ; of course, upon condition that we give that nixie there a petticoat, and provide that fisher-boy with a pair of swimming-trousers at the very least."

"Amid all these profound remarks we have wandered

from the main point again," said Schnetz. "Where is your wife?"

"She asks to be excused—says she is engaged—and won't show herself at any price. I told her to her face it was only on account of the Herr Baron. 'Of course,' she answered, 'I wouldn't mind the first-lieutenant at all.' Oh, my dear friends, if I only were not so hen-pecked! But I can assure you, much as I have always raved about women without brains, I now see clearly that they are the very ones who know how to succeed in having their own way. However, in the present case, it has turned out to my advantage. For no matter how free from prejudices one may be, he can't help making a wry face when he sees his wife blush slightly in saying good-day to her first and only love. Won't you come and dine with me to-morrow? Little, but cordially offered—*un piatto di maccheroni, una brava bistecca, un fiasco di vino sincero*. I think the lady of the house will make her appearance too—"

Felix excused himself by saying that he was to leave on the following day. Old Schoepf now entered, looking a little more dried up than of yore, and with his dark face almost completely covered by his snow-white hair and beard. He was in the best of spirits, and inquired eagerly about the campaign experiences of his friends. When the conversation turned upon Kohle, the old man declared that they must certainly go out and visit him at the villa, to see the frescoes he had already finished. He had only allowed himself a half-holiday, and had hurried back again as soon as the entrance of the troops was over, to add the last touches to the paneling. When Felix had to decline this invitation likewise, the old gentleman bestowed a look of questioning surprise upon his grandson-in-law; but he refrained from pressing the young man

any further, who acted as though the ground of Munich burned under his feet.

Felix was obliged to tell his friends about the position that awaited him in Metz. On more than one occasion he had attracted attention at headquarters, and his judgment and energy, the fact that he was acquainted with the French language, and, perhaps, the wish to have some one who was not a Prussian connected with the administration of the conquered province, had united in causing him to be made aide to the new governor of the frontier fortress. To carry out properly a task which combined such difficult and untried elements, fresh minds were required—such as had not merely acquired experience under existing well-regulated forms of government, but such as had been schooled in real life, and, fitted with the necessary mental quickness, were also equipped for unforeseen contingencies.

The grave face of our young Baron lighted up a little as he spoke of the life of activity before him. But an expression of settled resignation could be detected in every word he spoke. The others, however, apparently paid no attention to this; and, as he went down-stairs, Rossel shouted "*Au revoir!*" after him, just as in the old times when they were certain of meeting again within a few days.

As they stepped into the street, Felix heard his name called from one of the windows above. He saw young Frau Rossel standing among the evergreens, cheerfully nodding and waving her hand to him. Her delicate coloring looked even brighter than in the old days; and a little morning-cap, which she had coquettishly placed a little on one side on her golden-red locks, gave her round face a most charming appearance of housewifely dignity.

"You are not to suppose I don't care anything more about my old friends!" she shouted down to them. "At the entrance of the troops I threw a whole lot of flowers at you; and you, proud sir, didn't deign to look up once. Well, this time, at all events, you have turned to look at me. Your uniform doesn't become you half as well as citizen's dress. You don't look so distinguished in it. As for me, I couldn't think of letting you see me. But in six or eight weeks from now—you must come to the christening—do you hear? My husband will write to you about it. And, now, good-by, and good luck to you. I'm sure I wish it you with all my heart. You have certainly worked hard enough to deserve it."

With this the laughing face disappeared from the window, without leaving the men time to say a word in reply.

CHAPTER IX.

"AND now to Angelica!" said Schnetz. "You haven't far to go, and she is certain to be at home."

Felix stood still.

"Let me off from this visit," he said, his face suddenly darkening. "Help me think of some excuse, so that I shan't offend the good girl. You know how much I esteem her; but she is the only person who, I have reason to believe, knows all. The others may have been satisfied with that fiction about the duel; but she, Julie's best friend—"

"No matter what she knows or doesn't know—nonsense! You can be as brief as you want. Come, give me your hand on it. Good! And there's her house

there. I will say adieu to you here ; I have some business to attend to ; and I will call for you this evening at the hotel, and we'll go and see the illumination together."

"They are all so kind !" cried Felix, when he was alone ; "they all want to help me to bear what is bitter and irremediable. But it is high time for me to try a change of air. Here—where they are all going to lead such happy and comfortable lives, and where every one breathes more freely and more healthily now that the storm of war has swept away the old mists and fogs—for me alone to go about with such a face among these good, contented people—no ! I must go away from here, and the sooner the better. If I leave this evening, travel all night—to-morrow I can be deep in my work. I will beg Angelica to excuse me to Schnetz. She will be the first to understand that I am in no mood for illuminations."

He had no sooner formed this resolution than he drew a long breath, and hastened his steps toward the house which Schnetz had pointed out to him. The gloaming had already come, and the first candles of the illumination were glowing in a few of the windows ; but those at Angelica's house were dark. Up-stairs the door was opened for him by the old landlady, of whom Angelica hired her lodgings. The Fräulein was at home, she said, pointing to the nearest door. He knocked with a beating heart, of which he felt fairly ashamed. A woman's voice called out "Come in." As he entered the dusky room, a slender figure rose from the sofa, on which it had been idly sitting as if waiting for him. "Is it permitted me to come so late, my dear friend ?" he said, advancing hesitatingly. The figure tottered forward to meet him, and now for the first time he recognized the features of

the face—"Irene! Good God!" he cried, and involuntarily stood still; but the next moment he felt two arms encircling him, and burning lips pressed to his own, stifling every word and plunging his senses into a whirl of delirious joy. It was as if she wanted never to let him recover his speech again; as if she feared he might vanish from her arms forever, the moment she let him go. Even when she finally removed her lips from his and drew him, bewildered and trembling, upon the sofa at her side, she went on talking alone, as if any word that he might throw in would destroy the spell that had at last led the loved one to her side again. He had never seen her thus before; the last bar had fallen from her virgin heart; and a yielding woman, laughing and weeping in the sweetness of passion, lay upon his breast, with her arms around his neck.

Not a word was said about that which had kept him from her so long. It was as if the war had called him from her side, and now at last he had returned and all would be well again, and far more beautiful than it could ever have been without his youthful heroism and his honorable scars. He had to listen to many tender complaints and reproaches for not having given her any news about himself in all this time. But the moment he tried to say a word in his own defense, she closed his lips with impassioned kisses.

"Be still!" she cried. "It is true you are a great sinner, my darling hero, but I—what wouldn't I forgive you on this day, this glorious day of festival and joy! And, you see, it did not help you any after all. You imagined you were safe from me, and thought you could march in here with the rest without any one's being the wiser, while I sat and sulked in my old-maid's cell on the

Lung' Arno. But this is the time of miracles ! I cast aside my pride of birth, and all the good training I owe to myself, as if they had been old rags, and went to uncle and said to him : 'If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. That wicked Felix would like to be rid of me ; but it takes two to do that. Come, uncle, let us go to Munich. I must see my lover ride in through the gate of victory. Schnetz writes that he looks nobly in his uniform, and I can't help it even if the old countess doesn't think it proper for me to run after this faithless man. He ran after me long enough, and we ought to exchange *rôles* for once.' And so here I am, and have been sitting here on the very same spot for three hours, waiting for a certain youthful hero, and scolding terribly at Schnetz, who had promised me that he would entice him into this love-trap just as soon as he possibly could. And now it has actually sprung upon you, and you sha'n't be let out again as long as you live."

The lights in the streets outside had long been blazing in full brilliancy, and under the windows a joyous crowd of happy people streamed past toward the centre of the city, where the illumination was said to be the finest. But the two happy lovers had forgotten all else in the bliss, so long deferred, of gazing into one another's eyes and seeing the flame of inextinguishable love and devotion glowing there. She asked after the companions who had been with him through the war, and he after the friends she had left behind in Florence. But neither paid much attention to what the other answered ; all they cared for was to hear each other speak, and to assure themselves by the sound of their voices that they were once more united.

An hour may have passed in this way, when some one

knocked softly. The knock was repeated three times before they heard it, and Irene ran to open the door. Angelica came flying in, the two girls fell on one another's necks, and good Angelica's voice was so stifled by suppressed tears that it was a long time before she could speak.

"Of course I have come too soon," she said at last; "but when wouldn't it have been too soon? A thousand congratulations, my dear Felix—pardon me, the Herr Baron doesn't come glibly to me to-day—and now, make haste, so as to see a little of the illumination—it is magnificent—we have just come from it, and Irene certainly didn't travel five hundred miles just to sit here in the dark while all Munich swims in a sea of light. Besides, she saw very little of the review this morning, for she only had eyes for a single defender of the Fatherland. You will have seen all you want to in half an hour, and then I invite the ladies and gentlemen to assemble once more under my humble roof and partake of a modest cup of tea. Schnetz will also appear, and your uncle, the baron, has solemnly pledged me his word not to let himself be dragged into any champagne-supper to-day. It's a pity Rosenbusch isn't well enough yet! The poor fellow has only a lame leg, and an elderly girl as a wife, as a reward for all his bravery. But don't you think he bears his lot with incredible fortitude?"

The lights of the festival had long been extinguished, and the last joyous echo of this happy day had died out, when Felix entered the little room, which was the only one still to be had in the whole great hotel. Even now he could not think of such a thing as sleep. He sat down on the bed and drew from his pocket a letter which Irene had given him when he parted from her before her hotel,

and gazed—with what overmastering emotion!—upon the handwriting of the friend whom he had believed to be lost to him forever, and whom this day restored to him again, to add to all its other unexpected blessings. He read the following lines :

“Let this letter bear you our congratulations, dear old friend. When it comes into your hands the last shadow will have been lifted from your life. You will hear enough about us from the lips of your beloved, to satisfy you of our happiness. But, possibly, there may be one subject concerning which she may feel a delicacy about speaking ; our happiness is now secure from all external interruption. A few weeks ago a legal divorce was effected, and our union, which certainly stood in no need of a certificate to cement it closer, has now, for the children’s sake, received the sanction of the law. The unhappy woman herself lent a hand in bringing this about. She is in Athens, where a rich Englishman has been paying his court to her. The last spark of ill-will toward her has been extinguished in me. I can think of her as of one dead. May she find peace in the sphere she has voluntarily chosen—as far as such a being ever can find or bear peace.

“And now let us at least hear from you again, my dear old boy. All we have heard about you has rejoiced our hearts. You are about to enter upon a new phase of life, and to put in order that part of the world which has been assigned to you. I wish you all success. After all, it is your proper calling ; and if the wise saying of our friend Rossel is correct, that real happiness is merely that condition in which we are most keenly conscious of our individuality, you certainly must be esteemed happy, and

will make happy the noble heart that has surrendered to you. Dear old fellow, what a splendid prize each of us has drawn ! That we had to work hard to deserve it, is all the better. All that is not deserved humiliates. And we still have an excess of happiness given us by the gods, whom we ought not to be too proud to thank.

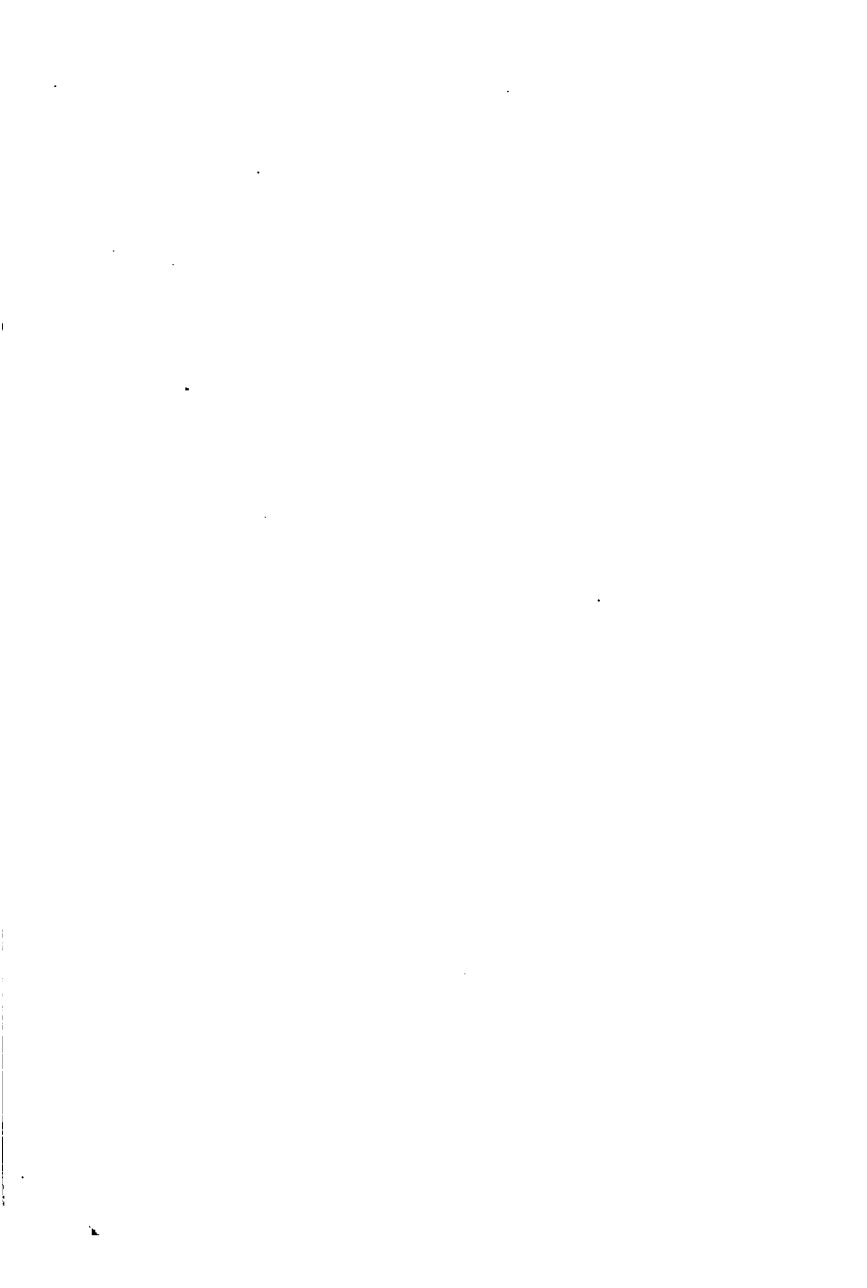
“But here I am talking about our own fates, and passing by, without a single word, the great and mighty event in the world’s history which has just been concluded. Though, to be sure, there are no words capable of expressing its greatness and importance. In the consciousness of this dumb amazement the feeling can scarcely be avoided that the Muses, who are usually silent mid the clash of arms, will not recover their voices very soon. You men of action have the lead for some time to come ; for the revolution that has taken place in the public mind, and the movement which has extended to all conditions of life and of civil society, is far more wonderful, far more pregnant with consequences than you, who took an active part in it, can appreciate in the first pause after your final blows. We who are lookers-on are in a position to get a more comprehensive view, for we can also see how the recoil, of whose force you can have no conception, acts upon our neighbors.

“The truth is, this is a period of reconstruction of all political and social conditions ; whatever is essential asserts itself, and whatever is *real* clamors everywhere for the place that belongs to it by nature. Consequently, those who are called upon to rearrange our new life have the first and last word ; while those who, like us artists, have to do with dreams, stand aloof and thank fortune if their names are still mentioned now and then. You know that, with all due respect for politics, I cannot regard

them as belonging to the highest problems of the human mind. The possible and the useful, the expedient and the necessary are, and must ever be, relative aims ; it should be the task of the statesman to make himself less and less necessary, to educate the public sense of justice so that the greatest possible number of free individuals can live in harmony with one another ; and each, alone or in conjunction with some fellow-workman, can occupy himself with the eternal problems. Shall we live to see the time when the arts which have heretofore flourished like wild flowers upon ruins, shall adorn the symmetrical, inhabited, and solid walls of the new structure of the state with their foliage of undying green ? Who can say ? Mankind lives quickly in these days. In the mean while let each one do his best.

“Farewell, and make up your mind to *live*, and to let your fellow-men *know* that you live. I wish you could all—dear, good, and faithful friends—wrap yourselves in the mantle of Faust and be set down among us at this very moment. I am writing this letter in a villa on the slope of the splendid hill that bears upon its summit old Fiesole. Julie is walking up and down the garden carrying our *Bimba* in her arms, while little Frances walks by her side, busily studying her lesson. How beautiful the world is all around me ! And with what still, pure, silent joy do I think of you, dear friends ! Come and give us a sight of your happiness, and rejoice with us in ours !

“And then we will make the old ‘Paradise’ to live again under another heaven and on a new soil.”



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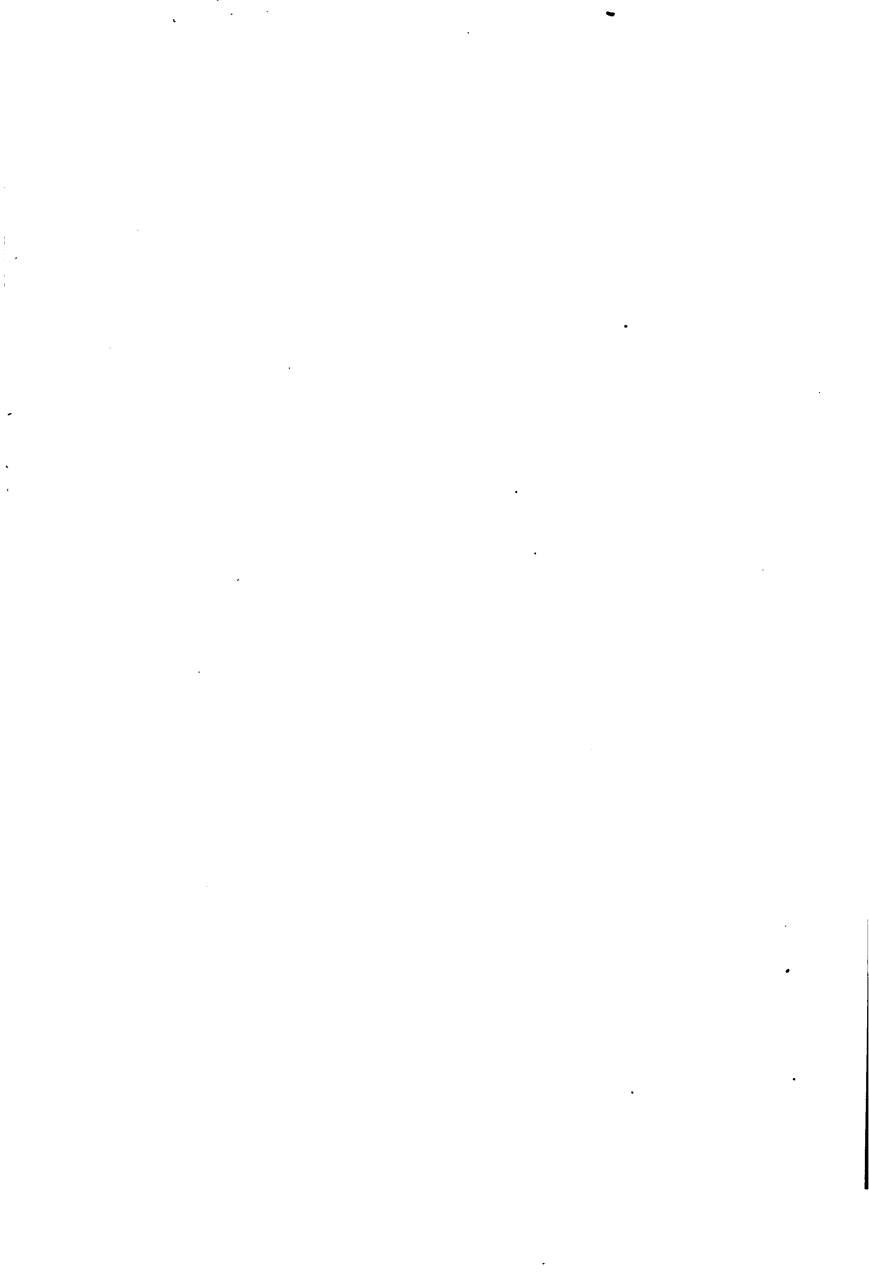
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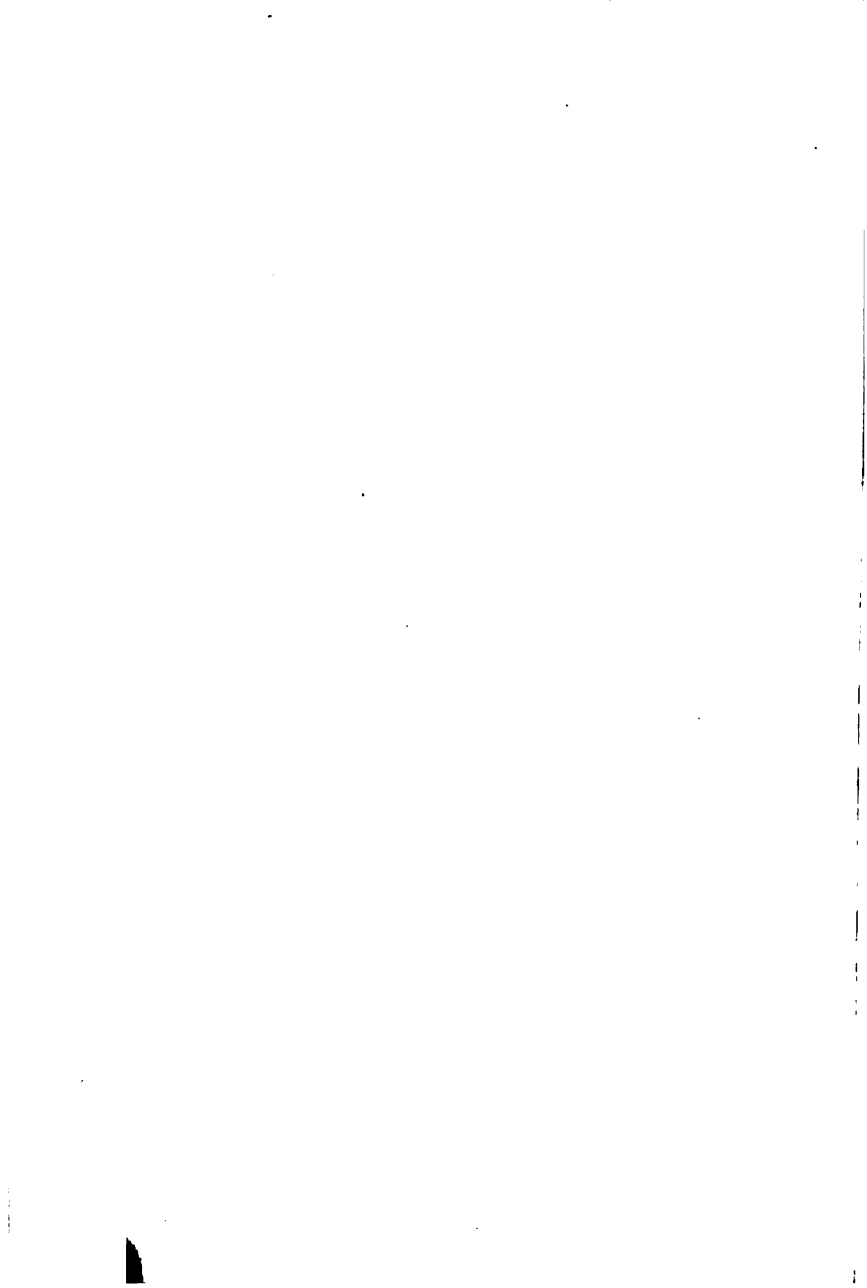
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